

MARATHA STATE FORMATION WITH REFERENCE TO SHINDE AND HOLKAR

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ABBREVIATIONS

IESHR	:	Indian Economic and Social History Review
IHC	:	Indian History Congress
IHR	:	Indian Historical Review
MAS	:	Modern Asian Studies
NAI	:	National Archive of India
OUP	:	Oxford University Press
PIHC	:	Proceedings of Indian History Congress
PRC	:	Poona Residency Correspondence
PRHC	:	Proceedings of Rajasthan History Congress
S	:	Secret
SC	:	Select Committee
SCIO	:	Select Committee India Office
SCLR	:	Select Committee Letter Received
SCLI	:	Select Committee Letter Issued
SI	:	Secret Department & Inspection
SPD	:	Selections from the Peshwa Daftar
SSRPD	:	Selections from the Satara Raja and the Peshwa's Diaries

INTRODUCTION

Among the successor states of 18th Century India, the Marathas under the Peshwas were one of the most powerful and widespread. With a new generation of Maratha Sardars like Shinde and Holkar in Peshwa's army, Maratha power expanded beyond the Narmada River as the Mughals were getting weaker in the regions outside Delhi. Marathas under Peshwa Bajji Rao I and Chhatrapati Shahu conquered Khandesh, Malwa and Bundelkhand from the Mughals through a series of campaigns by late 1730s. Above geographical regions later also identified as Central India emerged as a base for future Maratha military operations in the neighbouring region of Rajasthan as well as tracts North of Chambal and Yamuna rivers extending from Mathura-Agra belt to Allahabad. Central India acted as a new homeland for powerful Maratha political formations of Shinde and Holkar in the later half of the Eighteenth Century. From here Shinde and Holkar were able to revive Maratha power in Rajasthan, Delhi and *Doab* regions in the North that were lost after the Battle of Panipat in 1761.

Rise of Shinde and Holkar in Maratha politics and their role in Maratha state formation before and after the third Battle of Panipat can be better understood in the light of simultaneous processes of disintegration of the Mughal Empire and the rise of Maratha power under the Peshwas. In the South the Marathas replaced Mughal power in the outlying provinces after Shahu and Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath had stabilized their position in Maharashtra during the period 1713 to 1720. Next Peshwa Bajirao adopted the policy of Maratha expansion in Khandesh, Malwa and Bundelkhand. The rise of Maratha power outside Maharashtra received further impetus from the weakening of the Mughal Empire at the centre as the differences between the various groups of nobles at the Delhi court grew over the years following the demise of Aurangzeb. This impacted already strained Mughal central authority's control over the outlying provinces. Bajirao gave Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar administrative and military power through distribution of *saranjams* in Malwa and Khandesh. Shinde and Holkar families exploited this opportunity and made strong presence in the areas North of Narmada River in the later half of the Eighteenth Century.

*Mughal and Maratha Historiography in Context of
Shinde and Holkar*

The disintegration of the Mughal Empire and rise of the Maratha power during the 18th century happens to be the main themes in the major works on 18th Century India.

Jadunath Sarkar and G S Sardesai were the first to write authentic history of the Mughal Empire and the Marathas during the 18th century based on documentary evidence culled from Persian, Marathi, English and primary sources in other local languages. Sarkar in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire* made full scale study and mapping of the receding Mughal Empire in the context of the emerging regional and local power group's new challenges and coping up with the emerging power equations in the outlying provinces.¹ Maratha expansion in the North happened to be his main focus while dealing with the various regional powers that came to inherit the erstwhile Mughal *subas* beyond the Delhi-Agra region following the period of Muhammad Shah; the last Mughal Emperor to hold power in the outlying provinces. Shinde and Holkar's advance and progress in the North may not be possible to study on the same scale as Sarkar and Sardesai have attempted being contemporaries and complementing each others mastery over Persian and Marathi languages.

Like Sarkar, Sardesai's *Marathi Riyasat*² and *New History of the Marathas*³ were first full scale history of the Marathas based on the official Marathi records of the Peshwa period preserved in the *Peshwa Daftar*. Sardesai improved upon James Grant Duff⁴ and M G Ranade's⁵ accounts by bringing out first authentic political history of the Peshwa Period, Maratha expansion in the North under Peshwa and later Mahadji Shinde received prime attention as he devoted second and third volumes to assimilate his findings from the 45 volume *Selections from Peshwa*

¹ Sarkar, Jadunath, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4 Volumes, First Published 1932-50, Reprint, New Delhi, 1971-75

² Sardesai, G S, *Marathi Riyasat*, Bombay, 1935

³ Sardesai, G S, *New History of the Marathas*, Bombay, 1946-48, Reprint, Bombay, 1958

⁴ Duff, James Grant, *History of the Mahrattas*, 3 Vols., First Published 1818, Reprint, New Delhi, 1990

⁵ M G Ranade, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, Bombay, 1900

Daftar series of documents that he brought out of the documents preserved in the Alienation office, Poona.¹

More than producing the authentic political histories in the nationalist framework both Sarkar and Sardesai worked on vast mass of contemporary documents in Persian, English and Marathi relating to Maratha expansion and supremacy in the North during the later part of the 18th Century. To Sarkar's credit goes compilation & translation of several volumes of English and Persian records relating to Maratha expansion and supremacy of Shinde and Holkar in the North in the second half of the 18th century.² Sardesai, besides looking after the production of multi volume *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, also compiled another volume of Marathi paper relating to the period of Mahadji Shinde and Nana Phadnis.³ Besides providing easy access to the documents to future historians by translating from Persian to English and transcribing difficult *Modi* Marathi documents into *Devnagri*, both Sarkar and Sardesai have provided their own assessment of the trend of events as evident from the documents in the introduction to these compilations. Study of Shinde and Holkar's in North India campaigns, their growing power and their relations with the Poona court, The English, The Mughal Emperor and the various power groups in the North seems to have been close to both Sarkar and Sardesai.

Raghubir Sinh's⁴ *Malwa in Transition* also came close to the above genre of writing. Based on contemporary Persian and Marathi documents Raghubir Sinh provided extensive account of the Maratha campaigns and growing crisis of the Mughal Empire in the Malwa *suba* as experienced by the successive Mughal *subadars* after Auragzeb's period. Jai Singh, Nizam-ul-Mulk and other Mughal *subadars* role right up to the Maratha victory in 1738 found plenty of space in this study of the crisis of the Mughal Empire in the Malwa region. Raghubir Sinh's familiarity with the complexion of the Malwa as local Rajput prince provides first hand account of the impact of Maratha campaigns on a large number of small Rajput principalities that assumed independent status in the period of Mughal-

¹ Sardesai, G S (ed.), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, 45 Volumes, Bombay, 1930-34

² *Poona Residency Correspondence, Volume-1, Mahadji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs (1785-1794)* Sarkar, J N (ed. Bombay, 1936; Persian Records of Maratha History, 2 Vols., Sarkar, J N (trans. & ed.), Bombay, 1953-54

³ *Historical Papers Relating to Mahadji Shinde*, Sardesai, G S (ed.), Gwalior, 1937

⁴ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition or A Century of Anarchy, 1698-1765*, Bombay, 1936

Maratha struggle. Raghubir Sinh raises the problems faced by the local Rajput rulers in the transition phase when both regular Maratha campaigns and shuffling of Mughal *subadars* as a result of the growing pressure on the Mughal court brought the crisis in the Malwa to its climax. He also discusses the role played by Sawai Jai Singh in the Mughal-Maratha politics as *subadar* of Malwa. Jai Singh's larger ambition to expand his territory by favouring Marathas¹ paved the way for Bajirao and his sardars to penetrate deeper and deeper in the region during the period 1720-1740.

Raghubir Sinh's work may have been inspired by John Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India*² but its treatment of political history of Malwa in the first half of the 18th century remains a pioneering effort that studies Malwa *suba* during the period of the crisis of the Mughal Empire and the rise of Maratha Power in contrast to Malcolm's postmortem of Maratha rule over Central India just after the British occupation. What Malcolm's³ Memoir dealt with was the history of Malwa and other adjoining regions like Khandesh and Bundelkhand in the period after the demise of Mahadji Shinde and Ahilyabai Holkar as evident from the economic statistics and administrative details provided by him pertaining to Daulat Rao Shinde and Jaswant Rao Holkar's period.⁴ Basically Malcolm wrote an account of Central India based on his preliminary investigations of the region between 1817 and 1821 as a British administrator.⁵ The fragmentary history of origin and rise of Shinde and Holkar that he narrated were not based on contemporary documents but later reports that he gathered in course of his field visits. Thus Malcolm's work is a more authentic for the period of Daulat Rao Shinde and Jaswant Rao Holkar than the details on Mahadji Shinde and Ahilyabai Holkar's period which are based on later reports.⁶ Both Maratha campaigns and shuffling of Mughal *subadars* as a result of the growing pressure on the Mughal court brought the crisis in the Malwa

¹ Ibid., pp.162,

² See Jadunath Sarkar's foreword to Raghubir Sinh's *Malwa in Transition*, pp. vii-viii

³ Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India and Adjoining Provinces*, 2 Vols, First Published, 1823, Reprint, New Delhi, 1970

⁴ Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India and Adjoining Provinces*, See Vol.2 for the statistical details pertaining to Central India

⁵ Ibid., See Vol. 1, pp.225-254

⁶ Ibid., See Vol.1, pp.142-324, Family History of Holkars before Jaswant Rao Holkar is briefly dealt, major portion is devoted to the career of Jaswant Rao Holkar, See pp.197-324

to its climax paving the way for Bajirao and his sardars to penetrate deeper and deeper in the region during the period 1720 to 1740.

Study of decaying Mughal Empire and its politico-administrative institutions at the turn of the 18th century in the context of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire especially during the period of Aurangzeb and his weak successors have been the main focus of the works of Satish Chandra¹ and Irfan Habib² through his classic study provides a background to the weakening of the Mughal Empire. Both the scholars' work have strong bonding as they take up the working of zamindari and jagirdari system while describing the crisis of the Mughal Empire. Expansion and effectiveness of the Mughal State structure in the outlying provinces were based on the participation of the local zamindars and the local Mughal representative – the *jagirdar* in hey days of the Mughal Empire. *Zamindars* and *jagirdars* role in the Mughal revenue collecting machinery were paramount according to Irfan Habib and Satish Chandra. Mughal State structure came under pressure when *zamindars* and *jagirdars* started parting ways from the central authority as pressure for greater revenue share and fresh *jagir* allotment and distribution became unmanageable.

Since the rise of the Maratha power in the North started with the Maratha campaigns and the later conquest of the Malwa *suba*, it is important to visualize the whole political scene from Mughal, Maratha and regional perspective in the years that followed Aurangzeb's demise. Successors of Aurangzeb proved weaker in holding together the nobles both at the centre and in the provinces. In the absence of a strong Mughal ruler faction politics at the centre became more and more pronounced. This aspect has been highlighted in the studies made by Satish Chandra³ and Muzaffar Alam.⁴

Bringing more authenticity to the process of changeover from Mughal system to regional political formations, present genre of historians have expanded the horizon and have probed deeper into the socio-economic history of each region

¹ Chandra, Satish, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740*, First Published, 1959, Reprint, 2002, pp.19-32; also Chandra, Satish, *Medieval India: Society, the Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, Macmillan, Delhi, 1982, pp.67-75

² Habib, Irfan, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707*, First Published, Bombay, 1963, Revised Edition, Oxford, Delhi, 1999

³ Chandra, Satish, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, pp. 258-268

⁴ Alam, Muzaffar, *Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India, Awadh & the Punjab, 1707-1748*, New Delhi, 1986

while studying broader political formation at the province and district levels for a comparative study of 18th century political formation with those of the Mughal period. In the process they have expanded their study to other social groups along with the zamindars. Making use of a larger data base generated from the study of village and pargana level records and also studying vast mass of contemporary correspondences, news letters and private papers in not only the language of the Mughal court but also the vast mass of contemporary records in English and local Indian languages have been incorporated in these regional studies.

Suggestions have also been made by Barnard Cohn to widen the scope of study of 18th century political systems to all levels of elite formation right from the central authority at centre and *suba* level to the *zamindars* at *pargana* and *mahal* levels.¹ Cohn also makes suggestions for study of regions as functions of centres integrated by various types of networks, most common being the trading and political network binding together a particular region.²

C A Bayly's study for North India in the later half of the 18th century and better part of the 19th century focuses on the role played by merchants, traders and bankers as agency for change in the regional political formations that they had served as financiers gave way to British Empire as they switched sides.³

Muzaffar Alam in his study of the Mughal political decentralization in the first half of the 18th century has made a case for growing prosperity of zamindars as the cause of their revolt in Awadh and Punjab on the basis of contemporary Persian records. Another social group represented by *madad-i-maash* holders who had come to hold large areas in revenue free grants in Awadh region too became powerful and distanced themselves from the Mughal empire, due to their shifting relations they also came in conflict with the local *zamindars* argues Muzaffar Alam.⁴

¹ Cohn, Bernard S, 'Political Systems in Eighteenth – Century India: The Banaras Region' in *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and other Essays*, Delhi, 1987, pp.483-499

² Cohn, Bernard S, "Networks and Centres in the Integration of Indian Civilization" in *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and other Essays*, Delhi, 1987, pp.78-87; See also his 'Region Subjective and Objective: Their Relation to the Study of Modern Indian History and Society' in the same volume, pp.100-135

³ Bayly, C A, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion (1770-1870)*, London, 1983.

⁴ Alam, Muzaffar, *op.cit.*, pp.305-7

Making use of a large data base generated from the study of pargana and village level revenue records from Jaipur state in Rajasthan, Dilbagh Singh's study of local and revenue administration of Jaipur state in the second half of 18th century depicts progressive decline in the economy in Jaipur state through out the second half of the eighteenth century.¹ Eastern Rajasthan that this study focuses upon besides suffering from the frequent visits by the Maratha armies also had to face frequent famines. Dilbagh Singh has shown the local economy of Eastern Rajasthan in shambles on several counts: large scale migration of cultivators to Malwa and Kota region, decline in revenue collection from 28 to 50 percent, cultivated area shrinking by 50 percent, decline in cultivation of both cash and food crops, also growing incidence of contract farming called *ijara* as investment opportunity, as agricultural production by the richer section stopped.²

Rise of the Marathas in Maharashtra under the Peshwas and their expansion in the North during the 18th century period has also received wide scholarly attention as it was viewed as part of larger disintegration of the Mughal Empire process in the outlying provinces in the South. Irfan Habib has viewed rise of Shivaji as *zamindars* uprisings in the Deccan against the oppressive Mughal rule.³ Marathas were among the first to pose challenge to Mughal power in the Deccan during the period of Aurangzeb and later Maratha dominated areas were the first to breakaway from the Mughal Empire soon after the demise of Aurangzeb. Satish Chandra has highlighted *jagir* distribution to Maratha sardars as causing rift between the Mughal nobles and the Emperor, because later on as the Empire reached its territorial limits, it became difficult to satisfy the new applicants with *jagirs*.⁴ Rise of the Peshwas and expansion of the Marathas in the North was continuation of the political process that began under the leadership of Shivaji who successfully led Maratha *sardars* against Aurangzeb till his death. Aurangzeb's attempt to bring Maharashtra under Mughal Empire after Shivaji's death was met with strong resistance shown by the Maratha sardars led by Rajaram, younger son

¹ Singh, Dilbagh, *State, Landlords and Peasants, Rajasthan in the 18th Century*, Delhi, 1990, pp.199-202

² Ibid., pp.199-201

³ Habib, Irfan, *op.cit.*, See the section on Political Role of Zamindars, pp.384-385 & For Shivaji see, pp.401-405

⁴ Chandra, Satish, *Medieval India: Society, the Jagirdari Crisis and the Village*, Delhi, 1982, pp.67-75

of Shivaji after Aurangzeb executed Sambhaji, elder son and successor to Shivaji. After Rajaram's death in 1700 his widow Tarabai seized the initiative and rallied Maratha sardars against the Mughal forces till the death of Aurangzeb. Sambhaji's son Shahu who had remained in Mughal captivity was released after Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Shahu's initial years were full of challenges as he was opposed by Tarabai and Maratha sardars who had rallied behind her for so long against Aurangzeb. Shahu's inexperience and lack of support from Maratha sardars were tackled by a Chitpavan Brahmin, Balaji Vishwanath as the latter won over many Maratha sardars to Shahu's side and drove away Tarabai to Kolhapur. Balaji Vishwanath was made Peshwa in Shahu's council of ministers with unprecedented military and administrative powers. Here onwards Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath made steady progress as he stabilized Shahu's position as Chhatrapati in Maharashtra. On Balaji Vishwanath's demise his son Bajirao became the Peshwa and here onwards Peshwa's position became hereditary as Shahu began to rely more and more on Peshwa in administrative and military affairs of the state. Under Balaji Vishwanath and Bajirao Maratha power replaced Mughal power in the whole of Deccan and also conquered Malwa by 1740. Andre Wink's study of the Maratha state formation during the 18th century is based on Marathi documents both state and private papers which illustrates *Watan* as institution much akin to the *zaminadri* rights of the *zamindars* in the North and its role in elite formation at various levels in Maharashtra during the 17th and 18th century.¹ *Watandars* as *patel*, *kulkarni* at village level and as *deshmukh* and *deshkulkarni* at district level acted as functionaries in the Maratha revenue collection machinery as well as partners in larger political formations led by the local Maratha *sardars* who in turn supported the *Chhatrapati*, the Maratha King. Wink introduces *Fitna*, a concept much popular in West Asia to the process of Maratha state formation during the 18th century as he studied the changing loyalty and conflict among the Maratha *watandars* and *sardars* in the process of Maratha state formation under Shivaji and his successors and later under the leadership of the Peshwas during the 18th

¹ Wink, Andre, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth Century Maratha Svarajya*, Cambridge, London, 1986

Century.¹ Wink thus interprets the growth and transformation of Maratha State into a confederacy in the later period under the Peshwas and the Maratha sardars Gaikwad, Shinde, Holkar, Bhonsle and others within Maharashtra and outside in the *fitna* paradigm.

Rise of the Peshwa in Maratha politics marginalized the role of older sardars and the Senapati - the Maratha military commander. Thus Bhonsale a scion of Shivaji's family and Dabhades whose power as Shahu's Senapati - military commanders were later absorbed by the Peshwa Bajirao settled down in Nagpur and Gujarat respectively. With Bajirao leading the Maratha army, *Senapati* with diminished role had hardly any business at Poona as Peshwa took control over Maratha affairs. Dabhades drifted away from Poona politics and developed their base at Baroda in Gujarat after their serious rivalry with the Peshwa Bajirao in league with other sardars and the Nizam proved futile by the beginning of 1730s. Bhonsales too settled down at Nagpur as they concentrated on Maratha expansion in Bengal and Orissa.

Bajirao and later Peshwa as Shahu's chief administrator and military commander were subsequently in a position to act as the de-facto Maratha ruler, Shahu as Chhatrapati merely acted as Maratha head, distancing himself from day to day affairs at Poona court once threat from Nizam and Peshwas rivalry with Dabhade became a non - issue from the 1730s. Emergence of Peshwa as the de-facto ruler in Maharashtra and his growing power in the neighbouring Khandesh, Malwa and Bundelkhand had been achieved by a new class of supporters. Peshwa inducted his own men of Chitpavan Brahmin caste from Konkan in the Maratha bureaucracy and army. Secondly older Maratha sardars who had shown defiance and whose loyalty had been suspect were not preferred in Bajirao's army. From the mid 1720s onwards Bajirao led the fight against the domestic rival Dabhades and Mughal nobles Nizam, Mohammad Khan Bangash and Sawai Jai Singh in the company of new group of sardars. With unquestioned loyalty and some of them hailing from very humble background new lot of sardars accompanying Bajirao helped him in many challenging battles that took place from the mid 1720s onwards till the decisive Battle of Bhopal in 1738 that established Maratha control

¹ Indian scholars have been critical of such a concept being applicable to political formations in pre-modern India, especially Irfan Habib, Muzaffar Alam, See their Reviews in Modern Asian Studies, Vol.23, 1989

over Malwa. Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar also joined as a part of Bajirao's new team while he was trying to stabilize Maratha power in the early 1720s and showed total commitment during the campaigns in Malwa and neighbouring territories.

Maratha state formation in the 18th century that this study focuses upon traces the role of Peshwa's *sarads* Shinde and Holkar in strengthening and expansion of Maratha power in the North. Shinde and Holkar's rise during the period of Bajirao and their campaigns in the areas beyond Narmada River in the North, covering the erstwhile Mughal territories of Khandesh, Malwa, Bundelkhand, Rajasthan and Agra has been referred as Core and Periphery of household state that the two families ruled and dominated from Indore and Ujjain in the later half of the 18th Century. Stewart Gordon's¹ study of Maratha conquest of Malwa and Khandesh and later consolidation in the Central India region has the same trajectory as those of John Malcolm and Raghbir Sinh. Gordon brings order to the numerous campaigns in Khandesh and Malwa right from the beginning of the 18th century and organized campaigns under the Peshwa Bajirao by calling them as a process of 'Slow Conquest' that gets completed with consolidation of the Maratha power by the 1750s in the areas directly controlled by Peshwa.² Gordon analyses and grades the Maratha campaigns as being of increasing magnitude with the progress in time. Dislodging of Mughal power first from rural areas and then from smaller towns and finally the conquest of the main Mughal centres in Malwa and Khandesh as campaigns progress, needless to say Gordon borrows from Bernard Cohn's framework of "Network and Centres in the integration of a region." Gordon studies several aspects of Maratha state formation in Central India through independent papers that follows 'The Slow Conquest' reflecting on ascendancy of Maratha rule in the region.³ But political formations in the territory

¹ Gordon, Stewart, 'The Slow Conquest: Administrative Integration of Malwa into the Maratha Empire, 1720-1760', *MAS*, 1977, pp.1-40

² From the point of view of Mughal disintegration Gordon's 'The Slow Conquest' and Muzaffar Alam's *Crisis of Empire in the Mughal North* study the same problem of the breaking away of Mughal *subas* in the first half of the 18th century through different processes

³ Gordon, Stewart N, 'Scarf and Sword: Thugs, Marauders and State Formation in 18th Century Malwa', *IESHR*, Vol.6, 1969; Gordon, Stewart N, 'The Slow Conquest: Administrative Integration of Malwa into the Maratha Empire', 1720-1760, *MAS*, Vol.11, 1977; Gordon, Stewart, Legitimacy and Loyalty in Some Successor States of the Eighteenth Century, in J F Richards edited *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Publications Series, 1978; Gordon, Stewart N, 'Forts and Social Control in the Maratha State',

assigned to Maratha sardars Shinde and Holkar in the adjoining areas of Malwa and Khandesh during the same period have so far remained untouched.

V S Kadam's study of the origin and development of Maratha confederacy highlights the process of transformation of Maratha polity from a kingdom to a loosely knit political formation as the century progresses.¹ Kadam has traced the origin of Maratha confederacy in the operation of *saranjam* system, first adopted during the period of Aurangzeb's invasion of Maharashtra by Rajaram. Kadam's study brings in to focus the dynamics of 18th century Maratha polity.² The emphasis has been towards understanding political, administrative, financial and military relations between Peshwa at the centre and his sardars holding *saranjams* in the outlying areas.³

Shinde and Holkar's rise and progress as powerful Maratha sardars in the North in the later half of the Eighteenth Century brought Marathas to the centre stage of North Indian Politics. Malhar Rao Holkar and several members of Shinde family were instrumental in this process by establishing Maratha domination in Rajasthan and *Doab* regions before the Battle of Panipat. However, it was the revival of Maratha power after Panipat and their supremacy in the North under Malhar Rao Holkar, Ahilyabai & Tukoji Holkar and Mahadji Shinde that has so far only remained confined to many biographies produced in the early 20th century. Sarkar and Sardesai's treatment has been in much larger Mughal and Maratha framework.

This study makes Central India, Rajasthan and adjoining Mathura -Agra region its focus while tracing Maratha state formation under Shinde and Holkar. During the course of Maratha campaigns all over the North beyond Narmada, Chambal and Yamuna rivers role of geographical and other local factors have been acknowledged. How local topography and strongholds impacted the response of

MAS, Vol.13, 1979; Gordon, Stewart N & J F Richards, 'Kinship and Pargana in Eighteenth Century Khandesh', *IESHR*, Vol.22, 1985; Gordon, Stewart N, 'Burhanpur: Entreport and Hinterland, 1650-1750', *IESHR*, Vol. 25, 1988; Gordon, Stewart N, *The Marathas 1600-1818, The New Cambridge History of India Series*, Cambridge, 1993; Gordon, Stewart N, *Maratha Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century India*, Oxford, 1994; Gordon, Stewart N, The Limited Adoption of European-Style Military forces by Eighteenth Century Rulers in India, *IESHR*, Vol.35, No.3, 1998

¹ Kadam, V S, *Maratha Confederacy: A Study in its Origin and Development*, Delhi, 1993

² Ibid., pp.18-31 for *Saranjam* System of the Marathas

³ Ibid., See his Preface

the local elite to Maratha control and dominance has been examined at various stages of Maratha expansion in the North.

Nature of Shinde and Holkar's relations with Jaipur and Jodhpur state in the second half of the 18th Century has especially been examined in the light of the local resistance to Maratha domination in the light of fresh evidence. Examination of Maratha - Rajput relations in the last quarter of the 18th century from the Maratha and from the perspective of the local elites is based on first hand account of Maratha *vakil* at the Jodhpur court and regular correspondence of Shinde and Holkar with the Jaipur state. Also the focus is on Shinde and Holkar's growing role as members of Maratha Confederacy vis-à-vis Peshwa's direct relations with the Jaipur and Jodhpur Rajput rulers after the death of Sawai Jai Singh in 1743.

An attempt has also been made here to study Shinde and Holkar's household state in the formative years in and around their bases in Central India while tracing their rise to power in Central India and Rajasthan. Presence of the Maratha elements in Shinde and Holkar's set up in Central India and North has been also examined along with the induction of local elements in the army during the last quarter of the 18th century under Mahadji Shinde. Mahadji Shinde's role in North Indian politics especially his relations with the Rajputs of Rajasthan, the Mughal Emperor and the English has also been analysed in the period of Maratha supremacy in the North.

Nature of Maratha control and dominance in Central India and in the areas in the North, beyond Chambal River under Shinde and Holkar varied. This has been examined in the light of the mechanism of revenue collection applied by Shinde and Holkar in different regions. Comparison of the arrangements for revenue collection during the period with the Mughal and Maratha revenue administration is another objective of this study. Various Centers (Indore, Ujjain, Mathura and Kota) and Network that integrated the periphery with the core region have been mapped while studying Shinde and Holkar's control and domination in the conquered territories.

Satish Chandra's thoughtful essay *The 18th Century in India: Its economy and the Role of the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans* is one of the

corner-stone of this study, especially his remark, “The internal character of the states of the Sindhia and Holkar needs to be assessed....”¹

In a larger framework this study also considers writings of Bernard Cohn² and R G Fox.³ Muzaffar Alam’s and Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s introductory remark in a recent publication⁴ about the need to study the process along with the structure of a political formation is also important in this work on Shinde and Holkar where military campaigns are an ongoing process right from the beginning of the century but its nature changes in the second half of the 18th century. Cavalry based loosely organised Maratha army under Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde to infantry and artillery based army under Mahadji Shinde brought a sea change in the way Maratha army operated in the North from the days of Peshwa Bajirao.

The present work is divided into five chapters. Each chapter covers a particular aspect or a stage in Maratha state formation that emerges from the analysis of primary and secondary literature.

First chapter Regional Reality and State Formation not only introduces Central India and Rajasthan regions in geographical terms but also maps strongholds, logistics and communication network that played a crucial role during the Maratha campaigns and conquest of a particular locality. Maratha state formation in the North during the 18th Century has to be first seen as control over a complex network of geographical and man made strongholds in these region. Maratha rise to power in Central and North India was an unprecedented attempt on such a grand scale, in the past no power moving from South to North from the areas beyond Narmada River and Vindhya hill ranges had achieved so much territorial gains. In 18th century Maratha cavalry was fast on mountainous terrain but large rivers like Narmada were to be crossed at selective points, there was no better access to interiors of Rajasthan than the Mukundra pass and majestic forts like Gawalior and those in Bundelkhand could test any army’s strategy to capture them.

¹ Chandra, Satish, *The 18th Century in India: Its Economy and the Role of the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans*, Calcutta, 1991, pp.28-29

² Cohn, Bernard S, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Delhi, 1987, Several Essays mentioned above

³ Fox, R G, *Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule: State-Hinterland Relations in Pre-industrial India*, Bombay, 1971

⁴ Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed.), *The Mughal State, 1526-1750*, OUP, Delhi, 1998, pp.1-71

Second chapter introduces the local elites in the regions that later were conquered and incorporated in the domain of Shinde and Holkar. The advantages of terrain and strongholds in the limited area that local Rajput chiefs enjoyed were key to the success of the Marathas. Maratha expansion was in alliance with the local elites of the region. Nanadlal Mandloi of pargana Kampel in south Malwa opened the doors for Maratha Expansion during the period of Bajirao as he controlled the fords on the Narmada river. Chhatrasal Bundela and Bajirao joined hands as Bundela Chief needed his support to drive away Mohammad Khan Bangash from Bundelkhand in the 1720s. Bajirao in return got a permanent and secure base in Bundelkhand when Chhatrasal promised him a portion of his territory. From Bundelkhand Bajirao could launch campaign in northern Malwa, Rajasthan and in *Doab* regions across Yamuna River. On the other hand local resistance in several areas hindered Maratha expansion. Khichi chiefs of Malwa, Gohad Jat Rana Chattar Singh, Bundela Rajputs and bigger Rajput chiefs of Rajasthan were strongly entrenched in their home territory. The process of Maratha domination and control here was a prolonged affair. Smaller Rajput chieftains in Rajasthan in the last quarter of the century allied with Mahadji Shinde in their own interest. Kota chief Zalim Singh Jhala's association with Shinde helped both sides in gaining control over Mewar and Kota region. Zalim Singh neutralised the threat to Kota from Jaipur by allying with Shinde.

Third chapter traces the rise of Shinde and Holkar in the context of the rebuilding of Maratha power by *Chattrapati* Shahu and the Peshwa after the passing away of Aurangzeb. How Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar came in contact and rose higher as Maratha *sardars* in the new Maratha set up at the beginning of the 18th Century. Their rise to power has been dealt in context of Peshwas attempt to marginalize the older sardars and his growing reliance on new lot of loyal and humble sardars trained under his own leadership. Participation of the members of Shinde and Holkar family in the expansion and rise of Maratha power in the North after they had received territorial assignments in Central India both before and after the Battle of Panipat takes into account all major military campaigns in the North and South that made them the leading Maratha sardars.

Career of Mahadji Shinde had special bearing on Maratha affairs in the North. How Mahadji made a mark in Maratha politics after the third battle of Panipat is attempted in this chapter. Mahadji's role in the Anglo-Maratha War,

coming closer to Mughal Emperor and his later military reforms and campaigns against Rajputs of Rajasthan made him the most powerful Maratha leader. The chapter tries to find out how he climbed up facing the challenges that came in the way to his supremacy in the North.

Maratha penetration in Rajasthan forms another thrust area in this work. Maratha campaigns and response of Jaipur and Jodhpur rulers to Shinde and Holkar's attempts to control the economic resources of the region saw much blood shed for more than 50 years of Maratha domination. The chapter shows how the response of the local elite to Maratha domination was widespread resistance to presence of Maratha revenue collectors and their outposts in the region by the local zamindars. Shinde and Holkar's gentle persuasion as well as military threats and aggression so evident in the correspondences over a long period of time that failed to fetch them enough tribute from the Rajput rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur forms the crux of the arguments that Maratha had no more than dominating presence in the periphery. Mahadji Shinde's victory over Jaipur and Jodhpur in 1790 was a result of the local support from self aspiring Rajput chieftains and through superior military build up, the chapter argues. The region suffered due to frequent Maratha demands for money and visit of the Maratha army that led regular pressure on Jaipur ruler to pay tribute also shown by the regular war of words and stand off between the two sides depicted in the *Kharita* records. Pressure on peasantry and incidence of large scale desolation in rural areas of eastern Rajasthan also support Maratha pressure for money on Rajput chiefs.

There is substantial evidence of trade in certain precious items like horse and camels between the Maratha courts of Peshwa, Shinde and Holkar after Marathas made Kota their base and established regular communication channel with Jaipur court. Shinde also sought regular remission of toll tax, *Mahsul*, from traders' crossing over to Jaipur region for trade. Jaipur ruler was also asked to provide protection to merchants, traders and pilgrims crossing over to Jaipur region. Growing contact between Malwa and Jaipur region may be traced to from Sawai Jai Singh's period when he served as Malwa's *subabdar*.

Final chapter looks at Shinde and Holkars administrative and revenue arrangements in the conquered territory as it evolved after Peshwa granted them *saranjams* in Malwa and Khandesh. The ongoing process of conquest and expansion led to adding of fresh *saranjams* by Peshwa to both the sardars in

Rajasthan and *Doab*. As in the outlying areas Marathas didn't have much control, the chapter shows how Marathas collected tribute by making local arrangements and negotiations without taking over the revenue collection machinery of the local chief. In the core areas of Maratha control that covered most of south Malwa and north-west Malwa, especially Ujjain, Indore and Kota centres came up with administration network managed by the local kamavisdars of Shinde and Holkar. Growing incidence of *ijara* and Shinde's grant of large chunks of Mughal territory that he came to control in the 1780s to his military generals were taken up as measures to bail out the household states from the growing scarcity of funds needed to pay the army in the years of hectic campaigns and warfare. Bankers involvement in state finance is also shown to be a growing practice as both Holkar and Shinde began to rely on them for ready cash towards the end of the 18th century. Involvement of several bankers of Indore in Holkar's state affairs as revenue farmers has come to light. Shinde's dealings with bankers were even greater as were his expenditures on army when he moved to North after the Anglo-Maratha war.

On a larger scale the work treats the whole territory that came under Shinde and Holkar's supremacy as highly settled core areas of personal control where Maratha set up was well established and beyond that there was a large periphery where they dominate through their military supremacy. Here Shinde and Holkar had an agreement with the local elite to serve them militarily and pay the tribute. However, this arrangement worked only when the local elite was under pressure. Most of the time the local elite was freely operating and the Marathas had to apply military pressure to bring them back to their fold.

What is also evident is that various regions and regional identities are getting merged as Marathas and other local powers that emerged after Mughal disintegration were interacting on a regular basis now through their *vakils* (agents) in the courts of other local powers. Military campaigns, inter-regional trade and pilgrimage were bridging the gaps between North and South too. As it involved crossing local barriers and development of new military and trade route and also probably the language barrier. Growing proximity of Maharashtra and Central India to Rajasthan, Delhi-Agra and Doab regions as there was greater movement of people now than probably during the Mughal period is indicated in this work.

Nature of Source Material

Most of the primary sources used for this study are in form of correspondences in Marathi, Rajasthani, Persian and English by Maratha rulers, their associates, administrators posted in the local ruler's courts as well as representatives of British and other powers in the Maratha courts. Eighteenth century compared to the Sixteenth and Seventeenth century generated far more records as there was greater interaction among the new and old political formations and also because of the fast changing political scene. Regular reporting of events and local affairs in the North is evident in vast mass of documents generated by Maratha news writers, reports of the Maratha *vakils*, the Persian *Akhbarats*, reports of the English Residents that fills several volumes.

Marathi correspondences from the very beginning of Peshwa's campaign in Central India are the richest collection for the entire period of the study. Separate Series of Correspondences deal with Peshwa, Holkar and Shinde's day to day engagements ranging from military campaigns, movement of Maratha Sardars in the localities of Central India, fast changing situation in the courts of local elites, payment of tribute etc. As the period progresses these correspondences are richer in detail about day to day movement of Maratha army on various fronts and results of Maratha military operations against the local powers. They also contain details of the local terrain and strongholds enabling an estimation of the various stages of the Maratha expansion both before and after the third battle of Panipat. However, it is matter of internal administration-Maratha arrangements in the newly conquered areas like allotment of *saranjams* to Maratha sardars, appointment of revenue collectors, schedule and details of pending dues from the local chieftains under domination that the later Marathi correspondences also include along with Military details.

Marathi scholars have transcribed all these Marathi correspondence from *Modi* to *Balbodhi* i.e. Devnagri script. Holkar's official correspondences were complied by V.V. Thakur under the title *Holkarsahica Itihasacin Sadhanen*.¹ Shinde's official records referred as Gulgule Daftar have been also transcribed. Part of it has been printed under the title *Shindesahica Itihasachi Sadhane* by A B

¹ *Holkarsahica Itihasacin Sadhanen*, Thakur, V. V., Vol. I, Gawalior, 1929

Phalke¹ ; however major portion of *Gulgule Daftar* are yet to be published, though copy of it in transcribed form is available in Sitamau Library (MP) collected by Raghubir Sinh.

The *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar* Series compiled by G.S. Sardesai is another important source for the study of the early careers of Shinde and Holkar under the Peswhas. These are the published records that were selected from the vast mass of Marathi records preserved at *Peshwa Daftar*, Pune.

Maratha *vakil* and news reporter Krishnaji Jagannath's newsletter sent to the Peshwa and Nana Phadnis from Jodhpur court of the Rathores for the period 1785 to 1794 is another important compilation by D.B. Parasnis² published in *Itihas Sangraha* in 1915. This Jodhpur agent of the Marathas not merely reports the events of importance in the Jodhpur court affecting Marathas interests but also events in the court of other important rulers of Rajasthan like Jaipur and Udaipur and likely to have a bearing on the fortunes of Peshwa and his sardars Shinde & Holkar. Such are also the details in the dispatches of Sadashiv Dinkar³ to Poona Court from Delhi and Vitthal Shamraj⁴ and Vikaji Dattar from Ahilyabai Holkar's residence at Maheshwar near Indore.

In Rajasthani, Marathas ruler's official correspondences called Kharitas are addressed to local Rajput rulers and chieftains. The *kharitas* sent by Peshwa, Shinde and Holkar for the entire period of study are available in the Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner.⁵ They are very comprehensive and focused messages from Marathas to Jaipur rulers about their demands and requests besides routine messages. Details in the Kharitas pertain to Maratha pressure for regular tribute payment and settlement of the backlog/pending dues, territorial disputes and encroachments in Maratha controlled areas on the frontiers of Jaipur state, instructions for favourable action in matters of Maratha subjects having social and economic ties in Jaipur state or city. Besides there are regular details of animal trade from Rajasthan fair grounds especially of Horse and Camels, movement of

¹ *Shindesahica Itihasachin Sadhanen*, Phalke, A. B., Vol.I, Gwalior, 1929

² *Itihas Samgraha*, (ed) D B Parasnis, Poona, 1915

³ *Historical Papers Relating to Mahadji Sindhia*, (ed) Sardesai, G S, Gwalior, 1937

⁴ *Maheshwar Darbarchi Batmi Patren*, (ed) Parasnis, D B 2 vols, Mumbai, 1910

⁵ Also See the Published list, *Kharita: Gwalior-Jaipur (Vikram Samvat 1802-Vikram Samvat 1873)*, Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner, 1977

pilgrims and visitors under state protection. The language in *Kharita* documents highlights Maratha's coercive attitude and domination. As there are fewer *kharitas* dispatched by the Peshwas, that too in the 1750s and 1760s and larger number are written by Shinde and Holkar, it is an indication of lesser contact of Peshwas with Jaipur rulers as Shinde and Holkar grew stronger in Central India after the third battle of Panipat.

Another set of Rajasthani records called *Dastur Kaumvar* are records of men from different regions visiting Jaipur state *Dastur Deekhni* in the same series lists Maratha visitors of high and low ranks to the Jaipur court. These records add to existing perception of the level of contact between Marathas and Jaipur ruler through out the period of the study.

Both *Kharita* and *Dastur Dikhni* records substantiate widespread and perpetual Maratha presence and influence over Jaipur state and in its neighbourhood.

Among English sources Foreign Department Records from 1760 onwards provides supporting evidence on Maratha campaigns in northern Malwa, Bundelkhand and Doab regions in the post-Panipat period. Most importantly they describe how Mahadji Shinde got rid of the presence of two of the Peshwa's Sardars - Visaji Krishna and Ram Chander Ganesh sent from Poona to reinforce Maratha campaigns against Jats and Sikhs. Not very generous in details still Foreign Department Records corroborate descriptions in other sources on Marathas existing relations with Mughal emperor Shah Alam, Nawab of Awadh, Rohillas, Jats, Bundelas and the Rajputs of Rajasthan as viewed by the English officials posted in the Awadh Nawab's court and at Allahabad.

British Resident Charles Malet's letters from Poona Court written in 1781-82 throws light on Maratha relations with Rana of Gohad, a powerful Chieftain in the surroundings of Gwalior.¹ Much more extensive details by English Residents in the court of Mahadji Shinde are available for the period 1785-94. The correspondence by David Anderson, James Anderson, William Kirkpatrick and

¹ Sinh, Raghubir (ed.), *Selections from Sir C W Malet's Letter-Book, 1780-1784*, Poona Residency Correspondence, Extra Volume, Bombay, 1940

William Palmer further add on to the information on Shindes rise as a military power and Maratha campaigns in Rajasthan as seen from Mahadji Shindes camps.¹

Translations of Persian *Akhbarats* and correspondences by Jadunath Sarkar for the period after Panipat also provide extensive details on Maratha campaigns in Malwa and Rajasthan. Most of these Persian correspondences were written by Maratha and local news writers stationed at Delhi court. There are also Persian newsletters from the camps of Mahadji Shinde, Jaipur court as well as from Delhi court for the entire period of Lalsot campaign in 1787 and Mahadji Shinde's campaign in Rajasthan in 1790-91.

While Maratha accounts of the period by and large contain details of politico-administrative developments. It is Rajput accounts on the other hand that reveals the ground realities of the Maratha domination in the Rajasthan region. Letters of Jodhpur *vakil* of the Peshwa often describes fear among the local elite about consequences of taking on the might of the Marathas. Rajput account also describes destruction and long term impacts of Maratha presence in the region, especially feeling of opposition and discontent among Rajput chieftains due to Maratha presence. English accounts of the period are on the other hand valuable in judging the strength and weaknesses of Maratha polity as the English observers of the Maratha events were quite neutral to whatever was happening in Central India and Rajasthan.

¹ *Mahadji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs, 1785-1794*, Sarkar, J N (ed.), Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. I, Mumbai, 1936

CHAPTER 1

REGIONAL REALITY AND STATE FORMATION

Regions, Strongholds, Logistics & Communications with reference to Maratha Expansion in the North

History of the Maratha State Formation under Shinde and Holkar in the North is an account of on going *campaigns, conquests and consolidations during the 18th century (1720-1800)*. Campaigns, conquests and consolidations are different stages depicting Maratha power & influence, domination and control in the region and areas within that Marathas were targeting. Maratha *Campaigns* starting from early 18th century to the late 1790s covered Central India (consisting of Khandesh, Malwa, Bundelkhand), *Doab*, Rajasthan, Delhi, Panjab and went up to Afghanistan borders. Maratha conquests were made in Central India, Rajasthan and parts of *Doab* and in parts of Bundelkhand, this could widely be termed as Maratha areas of Dominance and Dominions that never remained constant during the period of this study. Maratha territorial gains as a power was limited to all of Khandesh, most of Malwa plateau and parts of Bundelkhand, this could be termed as fixed areas, of actual Maratha control or Maratha Dominions. Only in 1780s and 1790s under Mahadji Shinde and his European mercenaries some consolidation of Maratha power took place in areas beyond Chambal-Yamuna line of control. It is important to map *Regions* and *Areas* within the broadly defined territories of Maratha conquest and consolidation to understand the role of Shinde and Holkar in the expansion of Maratha Power in the North and their family holdings.

In the century old history of Marathas in the North, from the very beginning Central India was the safe base from the very initial stages of campaigns under Peshwa Bajirao and played host to Shinde and Holkar families as they migrated from their homelands in Maharashtra. Central India had its own geographical diversities as areas within had their own identity due to varied topography and settlement of people of different community over the centuries.

Malwa plateau and adjoining areas were termed as “Central India” by John Malcolm, when he penned down his survey of its past and contemporary history as a result of the administrative assignment, which he received as an official of the East



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India Company, after it was taken over by the British in 1818.¹ Since then references pertaining to the events of pre-colonial and colonial period in Malwa, Khandesh and Bundelkhand regions have often been put under the term Central India (for convenience sake) as for long it remained an administrative division of the British. This region was placed north-west of adjoining Central India Agency of the colonial period. It won't be wrong to say that Central India was almost coextensive with areas under the control of the Marathas in the 18th century period, outside Maharashtra region. Maratha sardars Sindhia and Holkar established their bases here after its conquest in late 1730s, at Ujjain and Indore respectively. While Holkars estates were mostly located in Western Malwa and Sindhia's in the north and eastern parts. Peshwa directly controlled most of Khandesh, south-east Malwa and parts of Bundelkhand. From here Marathas operated in Rajasthan and North India across the Chambal-Yamuna river bank.

Much time was consumed in getting acquainted with location of obscure places and much varied geographical features i.e., general landscape in different parts of the region, plains, mountain ranges, hills, ravines, course of the river, spread of the forest cover, fordable point along the river course, pass in the hill ranges, agricultural products, items of trade and commerce, areas and towns where they were produced, etc. It was also necessary to get familiar with man made features like forts, pilgrimage centers, trade, military and pilgrimage routes, *suba* and *sarkar* outlines, their bases as well as territorial holdings of different local chiefs, geographical distribution of different tribes and communities, approximate areas represented by specific area names of very common usage by local population, especially in the past like Khandesh, Bundelkhand, Khichiwada, Hadauti, Ummatwada, Ahirwada, etc., which were quite often coextensive with *pargana*, *sarkar* or *suba* boundary. We come across these details repeatedly while going through primary or secondary source material on the region. Secondly Peshwa was neither particular about Mughal *suba*, *sarkar* and *pargana* divisions while distributing *saranjams* to his sardars and own officials, nor organized administration on this line, but they have remained in spite of this helpful as point of reference for the study of Maratha state formation. Holdings of a Maratha

¹ John Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India, Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces*, Vol:1, Reprint, New Delhi, 1970, pp. iii-iv

sardar were scattered in different *parganas*, *sarkars*, and *subas* of the region.¹ The natural boundaries of Central India roughly are Chambal- Yamuna riverbank in the North, Tapi river valley in the South, Aravalli hills in the West, Gwalgarh and Mahadeo hills of the Satpura range in the East. The three different regions Malwa, Khandesh and Bundelkhand have had distinct regional identity since Sultanate days but their much known boundary lines were drawn in the Mughal period. On the modern map of India, Central India exists in the western half of Madhya Pradesh, bordering district of southeast Rajasthan and bordering districts of Gujarat and North-Eastern Maharashtra, roughly.

Malwa *suba* and Malwa plateau were nearly coextensive in the Mughal period. A comparison of Malwa plateau and *suba* boundary stretched further in the West to include Mandsaur, Banswara, Jhabua and Amjhera areas and in the south Nimar and Handia areas.² Northern edge of Vindhya range is the southernmost boundary of the Malwa plateau while Narmada river was made the boundary of Malwa *suba* in the period of Shahjahan when Nandurbar, Bijagarh and portion of Handia *sarkar* lying south of Narmada river were separated later on from Malwa *suba* and added to Khandesh *suba*.³ Northern boundaries of both the Malwa plateau and *suba* were marked by the Chambal River for some distance in the north-west separating it from Rajputana principality of Bundi or Hadauti, a part of which got separated and became the future state of Kotah, the town Kotah itself located on the eastern bank of Chambal.⁴ In the northeast corner Kolaras and Chanderi towns were located very near to the *suba* boundary, scarcely separated from the plateau boundary.⁵

¹ Shinde and Holkar family's holdings were scattered extensively in Malwa as well as Khandesh, Ibid., pp.123,149(mentioned in the foot-note). Also see the description of Pawar family's holdings surrounded by those of Shinde and Holkar in Dewas, in A. C. Mayer, *Caste and Kinship in Central India, A village and Its Region*, London, 1960, pp.13-14.

² This statement is drawn from a comparison of "Malwa Suba" and "Malwa Plateau" boundary drawn by Raghubir Singh in his work *Malwa in Transition OR A Century of Anarchy, The First Phase, 1698-1765*, Bombay, 1936, map of Malwa facing P.1 and Stewart N Gordon, 'The Slow Conquest: Administrative Integration of Malwa into the Maratha Empire, 1720-1760,' *MAS*, Vol.11, 1977, p.9

³ Alavi, Rafi Ahmad, "Mughal Geographical Accounts of Khandesh", *Medieval India- A Miscellany*, Vol. 3, Bombay, 1975, p.127. See Also, Habib, Irfan, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, Oxford, 1982, p.35

⁴ Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, map of Malwa facing p.1

⁵ Ibid., map of Malwa facing p.1

The land enclosed within these boundaries and physical features was not all along black fertile soil but as well as sloppy or undulating “alluvial tract scattered all over” interrupted by scrub land, small conical and table crowned hills, low ridges¹ open forest, ravines and occasionally very small rain fed lakes. Western frontier as well as eastern boundary of Malwa *suba* had hilly tracts formed by Aravalli and Vindhya ranges respectively. The major rivers were Chambal originating in the Vindhya Range flowing northward through western part of the plateau before joining Yamuna in Agra subah. It separated Hindustan region of those days from Malwa region. Sipra, Kali Sindh, Parvati and Sindh also originating in the Vindhya Range and flowing northward joined Chambal at its different stages in the same order. Betwa and Ken following the same course further east joined Yamuna passing through Bundelkhand. Narmada River as stated before running east to west south of Vindhya Range was a much known demarcation for the Marathas entering the Malwa *suba* when their raids in the region started in late 17th & 18th century.

In the early 18th Century when Malwa *suba* was a part of the Mughal empire, it was divided into ten *sarkars* - Ujjain, Mandu, Mandsaur, Handia, Sarangpur, Kotri Pirawa, Gagron, Alamgirpur (also known as Bhilsa and Raisen), Chanderi, Garha.² *Sarkar* headquarters were same as the *sarkar* name above described. Each *sarkar* was divided into several *mahals* or *parganas*. Every *pargana* had around hundred villages and sometimes even up to two hundred villages under their jurisdiction.

Khandesh *suba* prior to Shahjahan's period was very small, having no *sarkar* division. Nandurbar, Bijagarh and southeastern part of Malwa *suba*, lying south of Narmada were added to Khandesh *suba* by Shahjahan in his eighth regnal year.³ In 1638, Khandesh *suba* was further enlarged by the addition of Baglana as a *sarkar* lying west of Nandurbar, after its annexation.⁴ In total Khandesh *suba* in the last days of Aurangzeb had *sarkars* of Asir, Nandurbar, Baglana, Bijagarh, Handia(only the

¹ John Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, Vol. 1, p.3

² S N Gordon rightly describes ten *sarkars* into which the Malwa plateau was divided in the Mughal period but doesn't delineate Nandurbar, Southern Handia and Bijagarh as separated in the period of Shahjahan in his section on Mughal Malwa, in, 'The Slow Conquest', p.3; Raghubir Singh describes 12 *sarkars* in 1695 and 11 in 1697, when he says Bijagarh was “transferred to the *suba* of Burhanpur” i.e., Khandesh *suba*, in a much later published article in Hindi, titled “Isa ki Attharahvi Sati ke Prarambhik Yugin Malwa ka Aitihasik Bhugol”, *Ahilya Asmarika*, Indore, 1980, p.7 he has quoted 11 *sarkars* from a Rajasthani document where Nandurbar is not mentioned and *sarkar* Sahabad is added, whose location he admits is not known

³ Alavi, Rafi Ahmad, 'Mughal Geographical accounts of Khandesh', p.127

⁴ Ibid.

mahals south of Narmada) and Galna.¹ Burhanpur town lying in Asir *sarkar* was the *suba* headquarter, often Khandesh *suba* was mentioned as Burhanpur *suba* also, during the Mughal period. Before the enlargement of Khandesh *suba* in the period of Shahjahan, it was the area lying between Satpura and Sahyadri ranges and consisted of only one *sarkar* i.e., Asir. This area is watered by the Tapti River, flowing east to west, and originating in the area between Mahadeo and Gawilgarh hills.² The northern boundary of it only changed later to Narmada River from Satpura range, It had the same soil type as Malwa plateau i.e., black fertile soil. But it had a much more even landscape except the area covered by Satpura range dividing the cultivable land north and south of it. Watered by Narmada and Tapti rivers its fertile undulating plain on the eastern as well as western frontier, slowly became hilly touching Mahadeo and Gawilgarh Hills and Nasik area respectively.

Bundelkhand lying on the north-eastern border of Malwa is dotted with hills formed by the offshoots of Vindhya Range running northward.³ Pogson drew its boundary as such, "Bundelkhand is bounded by the river Yamuna on the north, on the north-west by the Ganges, on the south by the Sagar district and *Garh* Mandla; Rewah and Baghelkhand on the south-east and by the Mirzapur hills on the north-east."⁴ Bundelkhand is watered by the Yamuna, Ganges, Ken and Betwa, besides numerous small rivers.

Its soil was also "black fertile soil and forest cover in the area consisted of dwarf trees and bushes."⁵ The main rivers flowing through the region are Ken and Betwa. Ganga and Yamuna also watered its soil in the north. Here also alluvial tracts are spread in between the hilly areas which were "well irrigated through tanks"⁶ and "small streams".⁷ Bundelkhand was a part of Allahabad *suba* in the Mughal period. Due to its proximity to Malwa, references to Malwa, "at times also included Bundelkhand".⁸

¹ Ibid., p.129

² Spate, O.H.K. and Learmonth, A.T.A., *India and Pakistan, A General and Regional Geography*, 3rd edition, U.K.,1967, pp. 639-40

³ *The Oxford School Atlas*, 27th edition, Oxford, 1990, p. 21, 20-22.24N and 6-78E

⁴ Pogson, W.R., *A History of The Boondelas*, Delhi, 1974, p.130

⁵ Ibid, p.129

⁶ Spate, O.H.K. and Learmonth, A.T.A., *op.cit.*, p.627

⁷ Pogson, W.R., *op.cit.*, p.130

⁸ Gordon, S.N., 'Scarf And Sword: Thugs Marauders and State formation in the 18th Century Malwa', *IESHR*, Vol.6, 1969, p.416; Pogson, W R, *op.cit.*, p.105

Part of Bundelkhand came under Peshwas control quite early as local chief Chhatrasal “in order to secure the independence of his posterity, divided his territories into three parts; one of which, he bequeathed to the Peshwa Bajirao, on the express condition, that his heirs and successors should be kept by him and succeeding Peshwas in possession of the remaining portion of his dominions.”¹

The part of Bundelkhand Chhatrasal bequeathed to Peshwa consisted of Kalpee, Huttah, Sagar, Jhansee, Sironj, Koonah, Gurh Kotah and Hurdee Nagar earning 30,76,953 rupees as revenue. Kalpee was a large town, on the right bank of the Yamuna River, celebrated for being the mart of cotton and Khurwa, the well known coarse red cloth used for camp equipage.²

The other possessions of Chhatrasal were divided into separate states of Panna and Jaitpur to his two sons. Panna was assigned to Hirdeshah and Jaitpur to Jagat Raj. Panna was rich principality of Bundelkhand comprising of Kalinjur, Moho, Elich, Dhamoni etc and earned 38,46 123 rupees in revenue. Diamond mines of Panna were a big drawing force for local powers to Bundelkhand. According to an English Agent's report of 1762 Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh had his eyes on these diamond mines and wanted to capture them from Chhatrasal's son Hindupat, the local Panna chief or was demanding “rupees 100 lakhs as revenue for these mines”.³ Shuja had posted his troops at Jhanshi and was asking Hindupat to hand him over a fort near the diamond mines.⁴ English Agent quoting local estimates put the value of the diamond mines at rupees 150 lakhs and Shuja's strong position vis- a -vis Hindupat as latter had no forces to oppose.⁵

Kalpee was a large town, on the right bank of the Yamuna, celebrated for being the mart of cotton and Khurwa, the well known coarse red cloth used for camp equipage.⁶ Pogson in early Eighteenth Century wrote, “*Bundelkhand is an extensive and fertile province, celebrated for its diamond mines, iron ore, the quantity of grain and excellent cotton it produces. The latter, however, is dwarf and stunted in its growth. The natives of this province never irrigate their fields, and the fertility of the*

¹ Pogson W R, *op.cit.*, p.105

² Ibid., p.133

³ *Foreign Department Records*, National Archive of India (henceforth NAI), New Delhi, SC 1762(9,24)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Pogson, W R, *op.cit.*, p.133

soil seems to render that labor unnecessary. The earth is black, loamy and rich and in the hot weather, full of broad cracks and fissures. The hills produce abundance of iron. Some are of the finest marble; and the forestis famed for its ebony. The timber is dwarf, but sufficiently large for every purpose for which it is required in that part of the country." ¹ The whole territory is said to have yielded in the past rupees one crore and thirty-eight lakhs, but in early 19th century (1828) it yielded rupees 85 lakhs, of which Government realised about rupees 36 lakhs.² Revenue figures of the three different parts of Bundelkhand in 1728, when it was divided by Chhatrasal³ were:

<i>Territory</i>	<i>Revenue in Rupees</i>
Peshwa's Area	30, 76,953
Panna	38, 46,123
Jaitpur	30, 76,953

Malwa region was economically far superior to many other parts of Mughal India. Possessing vast extent of black fertile soil, on which a number of crops were grown. Industrially also Malwa occupied the first rank among the Mughal *subas* after Gujarat. In the Mughal period it was one of the most productive region and its revenue figures were among the highest from the Mughal *subas*. So much so that it could sustain successive regional powers because of its economy. Also its location was such that "All the military routes to the Deccan passed through it, so also the routes to inland Gujarat, and to the sea-ports on the Western coast. For striking at Rajputana, Gondwana or Berar, Malwa afforded an excellent military base".⁴ Large number of people passed through this area annually as well as migrated from other parts especially Rajasthan and settled down lured by its fertile soil and very "good climate".⁵ Frequented by people from all parts, Malwa has been termed as "Shatter or

¹ Ibid., p.129

² Ibid., p.130

³ Ibid., pp.105-107

⁴ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.10

⁵ Mayer, A C, *Caste and Kinship in Central India*, London,1960, p.13, where Mayer narrates his experience, "It is a common saying that Malwa has such a good climate and soil that people never leave it, but on the contrary outsiders from all quarters try to settle there."

Route Region” without “persistent political tradition” and “strong regional or religious identity”.¹

Agra- Burhanpur -Surat trade route passed through Malwa and Khandesh regions of Central India. It was a busy trade route established in the Mughal period.² It also served as a military and pilgrimage route.³ It was further reinforced according to Bayly by the “rise to power of Chitpavan Brahmins in the Maratha politics after 1750, for the orthodox Brahmins of Poona and Nagpur, Benares as the centers of the highly Brahminical cult of Shaivism was peculiarly illustrious. The Mughal campaigns in the Deccan passed through this route. Pilgrims also used this route as Gordon says,” Accompanying the trade *carvans*, in the seventeenth century, were large numbers of pilgrims bound for Mecca. The *hajj* brought thousands of Muslims down the roads of Malwa, through Burhanpur and eventually to the port of Surat for a sea transport to Mocha (or Jiddah).⁴ Passing through eastern Malwa and Khandesh it connected several important towns of the region with Surat port and Agra city like Mandu, Ujjain, Shahajpur, Sarangpur, Handia, Raisen, Bhilsa, Duraha, Sironj, Narwar, Gwalior etc.⁵

From Burhanpur town towards north the route got bifurcated, one route passed through Mandu, Ujjain, Shahjapur and Sarangpur going through the central part of Malwa before it merged with the other branch from Burhanpur, covering eastern Malwa at Duraha.⁶ The straighter and also eastern branch from Burhanpur to Duraha touched Mandwa, Chainpur, Handia, Nemawar, Sandalpur, Ichhawar and Sehore before meeting at Duraha.⁷ From Duraha the route passed through Sironj, Narwar, Shivpuri and Gwalior before reaching Agra. Hoshangabad, Bhopal, Raisen, Bhilsa

¹ Cohn, B. S., *An Anthropologist Among The Historians and Other Essays*, Oxford, 1992, p.109; S.N. Gordon, ‘The Slow Conquest’, p.2

² Khan, Zahoor Ali, ‘Roads To The Deccan in Medieval Times’, papers from Aligarh, *IHC*, Mysore, 1993, p.354

³ Bayly, C A, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars, 1770-1870*, Cambridge, 1983, pp.136-137, where Bayly says that, “the claim of the Maratha princes for a royal status on the lines of that of the great Rajput dynasties encouraged them also to seek merit by association with the holy places and to Benares, Allahabad, Jagannath and Gaya in greater numbers. After 1680 the Marathas appear to have replaced the Rajputs as major donors at all these centers”

⁴ Gordon, Stewart, ‘Burhanpur: Entrepot and Hinterland’, 1650-1750, *IESHR*, Vol. 25, 1988, p.431

⁵ Habib, Irfan, *op.cit.*, sheets 8B, 14B

⁶ *Ibid.*, Sheet 9B, See also note on routes, p.38

⁷ *Ibid.*

and Chanderi not falling on the main route but located at a very short distance were also connected to it by roads starting from these towns.¹

This route “developed in the Mughal period”² as the most direct passage to the south. “Bridges were built on small rivers” and “*sarais* were built” at regular distances for passengers as well as for the Mughal rulers and other functionaries when they visited south.³ Otherwise also fortified towns or forts nearby at many places like “Mandu, Raisen, Kanauj and Thalner were fortresses guarding access from the south”.⁴ Burhanpur town was closely guarded by Asir fort and the fort garrison which “perhaps escorted important travelers as well”.⁵ The road made its way across the big and deep rivers like Narmada at fordable points and through passes in the Vindhya and Sahyadri hill ranges.

The route was busy through out the year except the rainy season when it wasn't possible to cross the flooded rivers (Sind, Parvati, Narmada, Kali Sind and Sipra had to be crossed at some stage in the course of the journey) while travelling through the region. For marching army even the road was difficult during the rains. Lewis Ferdinand Smith remarked, “In Khandesh on the northern side of the river Narmada, during the rains, the soil becomes knee deep with mud, through which guns can hardly be dragged a mile a day, which renders the junction of distant detachments on an emergency, scarcely practicable.”⁶

In the monsoon period traveling resorted to the alternate route linking Agra to Surat through Ajmer and Ahmedabad which was otherwise not secure as there were cases of “forced payment by local Rajput chieftains from merchants and traders at

¹ There is a slight difference in the track of the Agra-Burhanpur road drawn in Irfan Habib and Raghubir Singh, Singh has shown two alternative road between Handia and Sironj in addition to the road in Irfan Habib's map, one touching Bhopal. Both these roads are drawn east of the main road drawn in Irfan Habib's map, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, map of Malwa facing p.1.

² Khan, Zahoor Ali, 'Road to the Deccan', p.534

³ Habib, Irfan, op.cit, p.31: See also Gordon, S N, 'Burhanpur: Entrepot and Hinterland, 1650-1750', *IESHR*, Vol.25, 1988, pp. 426,431 where Gordon quotes from Thevenot, *Travels in India* and later himself remarks, “Each town contained a *sarai*”

⁴ Gordon, S N, 'The Slow Conquest', p.3

⁵ Gordon, S N 'Burhanpur: Entrepot and Hinterland', p.427

⁶ Smith, L F, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the Regular Corps Formed and Commanded by the Europeans, 1803-04*, Typescript, Shri Natnagar Shodh Sansthan, Sitamau, p. 56

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different places in Rajasthan”.¹ Also the Rajasthan route was hotter and passed through Chambal ravines known for bandits.²

The Agra-Burhanpur- Surat route being the shortest and safest route for entering northern India as well as going to south and western India was militarily and politically important for rulers wishing to expand their frontier zones. In South near Adilabad close to Burhanpur separate roads coming from Aurangabad and Hyderabad merged, before touching Burhanpur.³ In the north through Agra it was linked to Delhi and other important places of northern India.⁴

These were the most well known routes from the North to South India passing through Central India. But there were several other alternative routes already existing in the Mughal period. Additional roads were later opened by the Marathas as well. Like there was a route from Ajmer to Ujjain via Mandsaur, linking Rajasthan and Malwa⁵ similarly route linking Gujarat to the Malwa plateau passed through Dohad on the way to Ujjain.⁶ The Eastern route through Bundelkhand was longer, and the area less populated.⁷ Ujjain town was well connected to all parts of Malwa plateau and adjoining areas by separate roads.⁸ Raghubir Singh has mapped the additional roads opened by the Marathas in the Malwa *suba* and adjoining areas during their campaigns in the first half of the 18th century. Indore which emerged as a major town during this period and served as Holkar’s headquarter was connected to Ujjain in north and Khargon in south, the latter linking it to Surat road coming from Burhanpur in Sarkar Nandurbar.⁹ Similarly an east-west road opened by the Marathas joined Kotah to Shivpuri.¹⁰ Only natural obstructions on the way from north were the Vindhya Range followed by Narmada River and to some extent relatively lower ranges of Satpuda and Sahyadri hills, all of them having an east-west orientation. The Narmada is only in part navigable owing to the excessive steepness of the banks. The

¹ Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.5

² Gordon, Stewart, ‘Burhanpur: Entrepot and Hinterland’, p.431

³ Habib, Irfan, op.cit., Sheet 14B

⁴ Khan, Zahoor Ali, ‘Roads to the Deccan’, p.354

⁵ Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, map of Malwa facing p.1; See also Gordon, S N, ‘The Slow Conquest’, p.3

⁶ Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, map of Malwa facing p.1

⁷ Gordon, Stewart, ‘Burhanpur: Entrepot and Hinterland’, p.431

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Narmada is very often called the *Reva*, a name derived according to the Puranas from the leaping and hopping motion of her stream (from the root *rev* to leap) through its rocky bed.¹ Narmada was “fordable by camel at Akbarpur”² On the Agra –Burhanpur route (through Ujjain) and further east near Mandhata for some part of the year only. Narmada represented a natural boundary between North and South, a term that we will be using to denote Maratha Expansion during the 18th century across the Narmada River and Maratha territory south of it.

Malwa plateau, Khandesh and Bundelkhand had the same soil type i.e., black loamy soil. This type of soil was perfect for cotton cultivation, which was grown widely in central India during this period. The other cash crop that grew well in Central India were opium, sugarcane, pan(betel leaf), indigo, grape, mango, melon, and sandalwood, but most of this were area specific as far as production for the distant market is concerned.³ Towards eastern side of the Malwa plateau the cultivable land seems to be much more widespread than western part, the northwestern tracts which were rocky contained Chambal ravines known as “badland”.⁴ Khandesh *Suba* was uniformly suited for cultivation. Forest products were also abundant in south-eastern Malwa, especially Bijagarh, Handia and Garha along with wild elephants.⁵ Besides crops and forest products, Bundelkhand was known for its diamond mines in and around Panna.⁶

There were many cotton textile-manufacturing centers in Central India manufacturing good quality cotton textile. They were located very near to cotton and indigo growing areas, required for producing cotton textile. Cotton was grown in *sarkar* Chanderi, Raisen and Handia in eastern Malwa in large quantity; in western Malwa also it was grown.⁷ Cotton was grown in “Adilabad area south of Burhanpur

¹ *Indore State Gazetteer*, Bhopal, 1996, See Introductory Chapter.

² Habib, Irfan, *op.cit.*, Sheet 9B

³ *Ibid.*, this statement is purely on the basis of visual analysis of the map & may be only partly correct

⁴ Spate, O H K and Learmonth, A T A, *India and Pakistan*, p.622 where they give approximate area of the Chambal ravine as 1,400,000 acres

⁵ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.8

⁶ Pogson, W R, *op.cit.*, pp.128, 169-171, where he says, “Boondelkhund is an extensive and fertile province, celebrated for its diamond mines, iron ore, the quantity of grain and excellent cotton it produces”

⁷ Hasan, S Bashir, ‘Textile Production in Mughal Malwa’, papers from Aligarh, *IHC*, Mysore, 1993, p.30

town, as well as in "Bundelkhand at many places".¹ Main cotton textile manufacturing centers were Sironj, Chanderi, Raisen, Bhilsa, Handia, Sarangpur, Hasilpur and Dhar mostly located in eastern part of the Malwa plateau.² In Khandesh main cotton textile producing centers were Burhanpur, Dharangaon, Nandurbar, Dhaita.³

In Central India among areas growing cash crops, food grains and other natural resources, and manufacturing centers the maximum concentration of all these were along the Agra - Burhanpur - Surat route. Ruler controlling this part of Central India could have easy access to Northern India and also could collect big sum in form of tax on cultivable land, and tariff from traders and merchants doing business in towns and passing with their goods through the trade route. Looking at the heavy concentration of trade and commerce center and fertile areas producing food and cash crops in the region, the possibility of overall income from this region was to be very large compared to other areas in Central India.

The keen contest for the control of Central India after the decline of Mughal Empire was due to such factors as its economic prosperity which could provide stability to a regional power. Added to its prosperity was its strategic location. Positioned half way through the Delhi-Agra region and the Deccan and Western centers of political and commercial importance and connected by a thriving trade and military route, it provided easy access to both North and South parts of India. It was also having a very good climate with adequate rainfall.

Maratha expansion in the North in early 18th century were clearly to revive the battle starved economy of Maharashtra which was not so fertile and economically self supporting. Peshwa's policy of northern expansion and acquisition of earlier discussed tracts along the trade route passing through Central India were due to prosperity of the region. Added to it were access to political centers & pilgrimage centers of North India and Rajasthan.

¹ Habib, Irfan, *op.cit.*, Sheet 14B. See also Pogson, W R, *op.cit.*, p.128

² Habib, Irfan, *op.cit.*, Sheet 9B. See Also Hasan, S Bashir, 'Textile Production in Mughal Malwa', pp.35-36

³ Habib, Irfan, *op.cit.*, Sheet 14 B

Maratha's Line of Control and Regions Beyond

So what was the Maratha line of control all these years ? Starting from Rampura in the south west on Malwa borders, this erstwhile Mewar territory given to Madho Singh of Jaipur was under Holkar's control but faced frequent rebellions from the Chandrawat Rajputs.¹ Kota was under their control and both Shinde and Holkar collected tribute from Kota ruler, Zalim Singh was an ally of the Marathas, Mukundra pass an important entry point to interiors of Rajasthan and nearby Gagron fort was thus within their control.² Moving further north and east the line of control was near Ranthambore which Marathas were trying to wrest from the Jaipur state by making repeated claims. It was an important stronghold and had a strategic location for controlling nearby areas (Ajmer, Sambhar, Jaipur, Tonk, Bharatpur) further up in Rajasthan, but Marathas were facing lot of resistance from the local *zamindars* and Jaipur state forces.³ Moving further north Karauli was a friendly territory and corridor for Maratha movement into Jaipur territory from Gwalior side beyond the Chambal River, further up and east in Bharatpur Jats were strong opponents till 1760s but they were weaker after the death of Jawaharmal Jat in 1768. Much later in the 1780s Jats mellowed and turned friendly to Shinde as circumstances after the Lalsot debacle forced Marathas to ally with the Jats. However, Jats were always hostile to Holkars. Kumbher and Dig further up in the North were important mud forts of the Jats in Bharatpur territory. Shinde's camp at Mathura in 1780s and 1790s was east of these Jat strongholds. Agra Fort next to Mathura town in the south-east was the turning point as the line of control turned south from Mathura towards Agra. On the downward slope from Agra started the Gwalior region where Gohad Jats had resisted Marathas throughout, from their mud fort at Gohad, only in 1784 they were defeated and Chhatar Singh was controlled. Gwalior south-east of Gohad was mostly under Maratha control except during the Anglo-Maratha war when it was taken over by English with the help of Gohad Jats for a brief period. South-east of Gwalior were the areas of Bundelkhand which was under Peshwas control since the time Chhatrasal

¹ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhane*, V. V. Thakur (ed.), Vol.1, Indore, 1944, No.157/21-4-1761; No.158/13-7-1761; No.162/13-9-1761; No.12/12-8-1767; No. 38/22-2-1771; No.141/17-9-1782

² See Gupta, Beni, *Maratha Penetration into Rajasthan through the Mukundara Pass*, Delhi, 1979; also Shastri, R P, *Jhala Zalim Singh(1730-1830)*, Jaipur, 1971

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 165, Magh Sudil, 1815/1758 & *Gwalior Kharita* No. 166, Posh Badi10, 1815/1758; Also see *Kharita : Gwalior-Jaipur*, Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner, 1977, Serial No.16 & 20

Bundela gave him for protecting his kingdom but actually was never under total control, local chiefs turned refractory after a while and were always on their own, especially after the Battle of Panipat. Only Jhanshi was under Maratha control. Areas west of river Betwa accepted Maratha supremacy, since Peshwa's campaign in the early days but local chiefs had never been die hard Maratha supporters. Khichiwada in the south west of Jhanshi too was rebellious state and defied Holkar's control and agreements for tribute collection as late as 1785. This covers the whole line of control from West to East. Only territories south of this line remained under Maratha control except for the period just after the defeat in the Battle of Panipat when there was a general rebellion by Jats, Gujars and Ahirs all over north Malwa and Bundelkhand region.

Territorially Maratha expansion and presence in the North can be understood as Core and Periphery divisions based on degree of control and power that they enjoyed. In the core areas Maratha government and administration worked. In the periphery Maratha military presence and regular campaign managed tribute collection. The line of control that we travelled from West to East demarcated Core and Periphery. Core and periphery relations between ruler and the local elite as suggested by R G Fox¹ is helpful in discussing Maratha relations with various categories of local elites in Central and North India during the 18th Century.

In the periphery there was Maratha domination from the beginning, campaigns were launched to assert Maratha dominance but local elite was always in control of their domain, the local elite had tribute agreements which they fulfilled when Maratha army applied pressure otherwise payments were partial or just token amount was handed over to keep the words, Maratha claims of huge arrears of tribute and other kinds of dues were the order of the day through out the period. Marathas finding the areas in Rajasthan not so rich in resources concentrated on directly collecting revenue from select pockets only. Moreover for similar reasons they didn't go forward beyond Udaipur, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Jaipur, Alwar line of dominance, basically Marathas eyed revenue rich areas falling in south-east Rajasthan compared to semi arid and desert areas further North-west. Ranthambor, Ajmer, Tonk, Rampura, Malpura, Toda Bhim, Sambhar, Bundi and Kota were the places whose strategic position, fertile tracts as rich source of revenue and commercially productive

¹ Fox, Richard G., *Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule: State –Hinterland Relations in Pre-industrial India*, Berkeley, 1971

centres led to constant Maratha presence there. Shinde and Holkar regularly applied diplomatic and military pressure to acquire controlling position at these places but local resistance and opposition from Jaipur and Jodhpur rulers never allowed them to settle down. Only after 1790 Marathas were in commanding position in these areas of Rajasthan when both Jaipur and Jodhpur went down fighting at Patan and Merta.

Chambal -Yamuna southern bank from Rampura in the West on Rajasthan-Malwa border right up to Kalpi in the East also depict nearly the same line of control that Maratha enjoyed for most the period of their stay in the North. Just across the Chambal River in Rajasthan lay Rampura, further northeast was Kota, further up on the curve towards east was Karauli, followed by Dholpur. Further east and south of Chambal lay Gohad beyond which Chambal emptied itself in Yamuna. As said bank of Yamuna was Maratha line of control in the North and East of Central India up to Kalpi.

Maratha campaigns north of Yamuna into the Doab region met tough opposition from the very beginning. Before Panipat and even after Maratha dominance in the region bordered by Yamuna and Ganga river banks was temporary and short-lived. Maratha *thanas* were set up and Malhar Rao Holkar & Raghunathrao especially campaigned in this region before and after Panipat battle. After his death Peshwa's generals Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna and Mahadji too tried to take over areas in this region from Jats and Rohillas but till Anglo-Maratha war, here Maratha presence was through military campaigns, local elites ruled supreme after Marathas departed. Only Mahadji Shinde's forces made entry here as they occupied Doab areas in the north-west roughly from Aligarh to Firozabad. Beyond this Awadh Nawab and English ruled supreme starting from Kanauj to Kanpur further east to Lucknow right up to Allahabad. No doubt *Antarved* i.e., area from Etawah to Allahabad was under Maratha's sphere of influence so were the *Doab* region from the Siwaliks in the North to the junction of Ganga and Yamuna at Allahabad in 1760s after the Battle of Panipat¹ and even before but not much was gained in terms of dominance and control or tribute from these areas across Chambal and Yamuna line of control. They were merely under Maratha sphere of influence for some time before

¹ See *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar* (New Series), Vol.3, P M Joshi (ed.), Bombay 1962, Introduction, p.8 "Shuja-ud-Daula and the Rohillas entered into pact with Malhar Rao Holkar whereby they tacitly agreed to treat the *Antarvedi* as a sphere of Maratha influence. Malhar Rao sent Venkat Rao to the *Antarvedi* as his agent but the Rohillas going back to their understanding murdered the Agent in March 1766"

Rohillas, Afghans, Shuja-ud-Daula and English made them their own spheres of influence.

In between Rajasthan and *Doab* territory Maratha found Mathura as a safe base in the years after Panipat. After the Anglo-Maratha war Mahadji Shinde moved up from his earlier headquarter at Ujjain to a permanent camp at Mathura and placed his garrisons at Aligarh, Agra and Gawalior to handle his army's manoeuvres against the local elites of Rajasthan, Delhi and *Doab*. Moreover, from Mathura camp he could serve the Emperor's needs better and had better grip over politics at Delhi court too. Kota, Jaipur, Delhi, Bharatpur and Agra could be easily approached and monitored from Mathura.

For the Marathas, Mathura as a safer base seems to have emerged during the Panipat campaign. English agents report Naro Shankar *Qiladar* of Delhi taking shelter at Mathura after Maratha defeat at Panipat.¹ So did Ramaji Bhawani, Maratha commander and Gangadhar Narayan, *diwan* of Malhar Rao Holkar after the Battle of Panipat.² Control over Mathura also figured in Maratha game plan due to its religious importance.

Rajasthan formed the periphery in Maratha sphere of influence in the North-West. With numerous fortified locations of its Rajput rulers, their subordinate chieftains and rugged terrain and extreme climatic conditions it posed challenge to an invading party. All three bigger states of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur derived their strengths from their impregnable forts like Ranthambhore in Jaipur; Mehrangarh, Nagore, Merta in Jodhpur and Chittorgarh in Udaipur. Marathas thus faced tough resistance and repeated claims for tribute were even not honoured by the Rajput rulers. It was only pitched battle that brought the Rajput forces down, that too with the aid of Europeanised Maratha forces in 1790. The whole region was a complex of forts (*garh*) and fortalices (*garhi*) of the local elites that Marathas had to encounter during their campaigns. Aravali was a defining feature that demarcated agriculturally better off Eastern Rajasthan from desert like Western Rajasthan which was rain scarce and had low water table.

¹ *Foreign Department Records*, NAI, SC 1761(7, 77, 8, 81)

² *Ibid.*

“Economically the region was underdeveloped as compared to neighbouring Malwa, Gujarat, Delhi and Agra because of ecological limitations.”¹ However, for trading in quality horses brought from Sindh side along with other draft animals like camel, Pushkar, Mundawa (Nagor), Balotra, Patan and Jaipur were important centres during the 18th century, buyers from the Malwa & Agra region flocked to these markets.² Turkish Horses were ordered from Jaipur horse market for the Poona court to be used by the Peshwa.³ Also trade route connecting the upper Gangetic plain with the seaports of Gujarat passed through eastern Rajasthan.⁴

Since most of agriculturally rich pockets in Rajasthan were concentrated in its south-eastern part, Marathas activities were also largely confined to this region in the next fifty years as they coveted fertile portions of land with good revenue potential, as also commercially dynamic centres. Ajmer, Kishangarh, Shahpura, Malpura, Rampura, Tonk, Toda, Sambhar, Kota and Bundi happened to be major areas of Maratha interest till the end of the 18th century; all these areas were also located where frontiers of the three major Rajput states of Mewar, Marwar and Jaipur converged. Most of the areas besides these falling in Mewar, Marwar and Jaipur were not so attractive to the Marathas in terms of revenue earnings as this particular concentration of land. Probably that is how one can explain Marathas long term involvement in Rajasthan despite stiff resistance all around.

Horse trading centers in Rajasthan were an important attraction for the Marathas. *Kharitas* of Holkar and Shinde refer to demands for horses and Maratha representatives’ crossing over to Rajasthan to purchase horses and camels from Rajgarh and Patan just before the Battle of Panipat.⁵ Mahadji Shinde wrote to Jaipur ruler Prithvi Singh in 1771 to facilitate his North Indian ally Himmat Bahadur and Anupgiri’s agent Gosain Jagrupgiri who had gone to buy horse and camel from the fair ground in Rajasthan.⁶ Mahadji in 1772 bought horses for his own requirements as

¹ Singh, Dilbagh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants: Rajasthan in the 18th Century*, Delhi, 1990, p.2

² *Gawalior Kharita* No.19, Margashir Badi 4, 1828/1771; *Gawalior Kharita* No. 136, Bhadon Badi 2, 1828/1771; *Gawalior Kharita* No.107, Baisakh Sudi 9, 1843/1786; *Gawalior Kharita* No.105, Jeth Badi 5, 1843/1786; Gommans, Jos J L, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, 1710-1780*, Leiden, 1995, pp.80-82

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 28, Chaitra Sudi 6, 1848/1791

⁴ Singh, Dilbagh, *op.cit*, p.2

⁵ *Holkar Kharita*, No.80, Posh, 1818/1761

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.19, Margashir Badi 4, 1828/1771

wrote to Prithvi Singh to let his man Maujdin buy good horses first from an undisclosed fair ground.¹ Mahadji in 1791 wrote to Jaipur ruler Pratap Singh requesting four horses of Turkish variety for Peshwa at Puna which traders had brought from abroad.² In 1791 towards the end of the year Mahadji again asked Pratap Singh to send 10 Turkish Horses of good health, sturdy, intelligent (swift, trained) type³ “Many of the local *melas*, in Rajasthan also called *hats* (weekly fairs), became important outlets for indigenous horse-breeds of Sind and Gujarat”⁴ which sold alongside the foreign breeds coming from major breeding areas of Central Asia⁵ Maratha sardars needed horses for their cavalry at cheaper rate and these markets served their purpose as they sold horses from horse trading centres in Rajasthan at Pushkar near Ajmer, Mundwa near Nagor and Balotra near Jodhpur were attended by representatives of Maratha sardars and their allies. At Pushkar fair during autumn around 5000 horses were put on sale.⁶ Mahadji took personal interest in promoting Pushkar fair which probably suffered due to Shinde’s campaigns in 1787 and 1790 and wrote to Pratap Singh⁷ “Shri Pushkar fair has been organized in *Kartik* month every year and this year too ask all traders to attend the fair and inform them about it”.⁸ Rajasthan had indigenous breeding centres too.⁹ “Ummedganj fair in the neighbouring Malwa 200 km to the south-east, serviced the Kota state with horses”¹⁰ and must have been attended by buyers from Maratha camps too.

In the early phase of Maratha campaigns when Maratha frontier in the North didn’t go much beyond Malwa plateau Kota served as a local Maratha base for making moves in Rajasthan and Jats territories of Bharatpur and Gohad as well as Rohilla territories across the Chambal river in the North. Kota was the earliest base of

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.25, Magh Sudi 14, 1829/1772

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.28, Chaitra Sudi 6, 1848/1791; also see *Gwalior Kharita* No.30, Baishakh Sudi 9 1848/1791; *Gwalior Kharita* No.50, Posh Sudi 8, 1848/1791 & *Gwalior Kharita* No.54, Mah Sudi 1, 1848/1791

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.51, Posh Sudi 13, 1848/1791

⁴ Gommans, Jos J L, *op.cit.*, pp.80-81

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.79

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.81

⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No.43, Aasoj Sudi 5, 1848/1791

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.80

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.81

the Marathas in the North.¹ The period from 1732 to 1761 was one of the Maratha expansion in Northern India and Rajputana. Kota was the gateway to Rajputana. Besides, Kota was a small state, unable to resist the aggressions and depredations of the Deccani raiders. Through the Mukundra Pass in the Mukundra Hills of the Aravali range located south of Kota the Maratha hordes used to pour into the states of Kota, Bundi and Jaipur.² Famous Gagron fort lay nearby the Mukundra Range and was a famous strong hold of the Mughals and its location was strategic for the Maratha campaigns in Rajasthan and Jat territory. Gagron lay south to another famous Mughal fort of Ranthambor which was under Mughal control till 1753. Control on Gagron facilitated movement on the route via Kota to Rajasthan and Delhi which was an all weather route, especially in the monsoon season when Burhanpur-Agra-Delhi route was not easy. Kota became one of the permanent Maratha out post as early as 1742, here Peshwa appointed Balaji Yashwant Gulgule as his representative and revenue collector. In the 1750s & 1760s as Maratha penetration in Rajasthan and neighbouring Delhi region was being actively pursued, Shinde and Holkar were also campaigning in Delhi, Panjab and further North-West near the Afghan borders. Kota became an important Maratha base for these operations in the North. Much more direct routes from Ujjain and Indore came into use as Maratha presence in the North necessitated communication and supplies to the various camps on regular basis. In the 1750s and 1760s Kota became main hub of the Marathas for the military activity in the North. Arms and ammunition depot and factory were set up here to maintain supplies to Maratha camps in nearby frontier posts.

Economic & strategic importance of certain pocket had their own attraction for the Marathas, so Shindes tried hard to gain control over the salt trade at Sambhar in Rajasthan in which both Jaipur and Jodhpur had fifty-fifty stake. So was the case of famed diamond mines of Panna³ in Bundelkhand where Shuja-ud-Daula, English East India Company and the Marathas tried to gain control from the local Bundela chief by wresting control over the nearby forts. Even iron ore mines in the Gwalior and Bundelkhand region⁴ gained importance for casting guns and canon balls and other

¹ *GulguleDaftar*, Vol.1, typescript, Shri Natnagar Shodh Sansthan, Sitamau, L.2/1742; *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, A B Phalke(ed), Gwalior, 1929, L.2/1742

² Shastri, R P, *op.cit.*, p. 27

³ Pogson, W R, *op.cit.*, pp.157, 169-171

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.157

military and civil needs right from the time of Malhar Rao Holkar who along with her daughter-in-law Ahilyabai raised artillery for his army in the *karkhanas* near Gwalior¹ and later in the 1780s Mahadji Shinde also got guns and cannon balls made here.²

Understanding Regional Reality and State Formation

Shinde and Holkar families thrived on military campaigns, due to their excellent cavalry, mastery in guerilla warfare and later on their European style military set up as per the requirements of warfare in the North. Maratha state formation in the North was a continuous function of highly mobile army engaged in repeated march and siege of the strongholds of local elites in the forward areas. The expansion of Maratha power by these sardars in military and economic terms could be better understood by having a feel of the regional geography and topography of the area where they were highly mobile through out the period of their campaigns and the way they negotiated physical hurdles.

Geographical aspects were very closely associated with Maratha expansion that began with Peshwa assigning territories to his sardars Shinde and Holkar in the North. Broadly speaking movement of the Maratha army and the geographical spread of the Marathas under Shinde and Holkar was more vertical than lateral as they marched to North, first from Poona into Malwa and Bundelkhand and afterwards from Indore and Ujjain to areas further North. This becomes clear by comparing their movement with Gaikwad and Bhonsale's position in the West and East. In the much later stages too, Kota, Mathura, Agra, Jhanshi and Delhi came to have Maratha establishments that were positioned straighter in the North from their headquarters in Central India. Highly mobile army of Shinde and Holkar crossed over major rivers Narmada, Chambal, Yamuna and several other rivers that stood between Poona court of the Peshwas and their camps and outposts (*thanas*) in the North. They created a South –North corridor which can be better understood by their use of the several military and trade routes, of which the earlier Mughal highway from North to South & West via Agra, Gwalior, Burhanpur was one. Moreover, later on Shinde and Holkar's camps-court in the North were never stationary and moved into Rajasthan in the west as well as *Doab* in the east for their military forays from Kota and Mathura.

¹ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, V V Thakur (ed.), Indore, 1944, No.216/10-2-1765

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, J N Sarkar (trans.&ed.), Bombay, 1954, No.3/p. 25

Another important geographical aspect that concerns Shinde and Holkar relates to Peshwa's distribution of territories given in grant to them from time to time mostly falling in Central India. When Peshwa assigned conquered and yet to be conquered areas to Shinde and Holkar, he denied them the advantages of aggrandizing their holdings, their allotted territories lay dispersed far and wide. It poses a challenge in mapping and understanding the geographical spread of the estates of the two families as it lay interspersed, a predetermined strategy of the Peshwas to keep the *sardars* in control.¹

In and around Kota all three sardars Shinde, Holkar and Pawar had their holdings, and Kota *vakil* Gulgule managed their revenue accounts separately from three areas Khairabad Bakani, Bhilwadi and Kota.²

What led to Maratha expansion in the North? At the beginning of the 18th Century Maratha homeland was a war ravaged territory. Constant warfare against Aurangzeb for more than two decades had left Agriculture and related economic activity in a state of decline. The countryside in Maharashtra and neighbouring Khandesh had deserted villages and land uncultivated for years when Shahu & Peshwa came to power. Moreover, Maharashtra's natural resources were limited and unevenly distributed. Even before the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji, Maharashtra in 17th Century was not a prosperous region compared to other neighbouring regions like Gujarat, Khandesh and Malwa. The Konkan coast had fertile tracts that ran from North to South but were nowhere more than 50 km wide all along the Malabar Coast. To the east of Konkan ran mountainous tract of Western Ghats in parallel from North to South, flatter at the top housing famous hill forts but not very much suited for agriculture work? Beyond the Western Ghats there is a gentle descend towards east into hilly tract. They are further replaced by undulating tracts much lower in altitude and flatter plains. But the region east of Western Ghats was devoid of normal monsoon rains as it fell in the rain shadow area. Agriculture activity in this part of Maharashtra too was limited due to scarcity of rain. Godavari, Bhima and Krishna originating in the Western Ghats were the main river that ran

¹ *A Historical Atlas of South Asia*, Schwaratzberg, Joseph E.(ed.), Oxford, 1992 also shares this view see his comments on p.211 "A single map can not hope to portray adequately the political geography of the period of Maratha prominence, and we confidently expect that future research will not only modify the view we have presented but also provide a much fuller explanation of the pattern of events."

² *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1 L.20/24-5-1744; *Gulgule Daftar*, Vol.1, L.20/24-5-1744

from West to East. Poverty in villages was wide spread at the beginning of the 18th century as long years of warfare further ruined agriculture and allied economic activities. Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde's families had little resources at their disposal in their respective villages. To bail out their families from economic hardship they left their family profession and moved out of their villages and joined the local Maratha sardars to earn their livelihood. About Ranoji Shinde Malleeson commented in 1869, "....descendant of a decayed Rajpoot family of Kunnierkheer, a village fifteen miles east of Satara, had been reduced to such a state of poverty, that he had entered the service of the Peshwa as slipper bearer."¹ Before joining Kanthaji Kadam Bande, a Maratha sardars active in west Khandesh, Malhar Holkar's family lived in Hol village on the north bank of the Nira river in west Khandesh and earned their living by rearing goats, after the death of his father Malhar moved to the house of his maternal uncle Bhojraj Bargal, *Chaugala* (village officer) of Taloda with his mother.²

Shahu after his return from Mughal captivity had little resources at his disposal. Royal treasury ran empty in Rajaram and Tarabai's regime due to hectic warfare and disturbances all around. Shahu's situation worsened with civil war and had run into debt to bankers whom Peshwa mobilized to support the financial needs of the new regime. Little scope for improvement in revenue flow from the prevailing conditions in Maharashtra forced Peshwa to look towards North. Khandesh and Malwa were prosperous Mughal *subas* with high agricultural production and thriving trade and commerce with Western and Northern India. It was Bajirao who chose the policy of Maratha expansion in the North as the survival strategy to bail out Shahu from the financial crisis that he was facing from the very beginning. Shrinking Mughal power in the outlying regions of Malwa, Gujarat and Khandesh was also a factor that complemented Bajirao's plans.

In the process of its expansion in the North, Maratha power in the 18th century crossed over many geographical boundaries. Shinde and Holkar families thrived on military campaigns due to their excellent cavalry, mastery in guerilla warfare and later on their adjustments in military set up as per the requirements of

¹ Malleeson, G.B., *Recreations of An Indian Official*, London, 1872, See, the chapter on Madhaje Sindia, p.331

² Mohan Singh, *Waqa - i - Holkar*, J N Sarkar(trans.), Typescript, Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau , p.2

warfare in the North. First it was Khandesh, then it was Malwa Plateau and Bundelkhand, all combined had a common denomination Central India coined by British administrator James Tod & John Malcolm.¹ Later Rajasthan Delhi and *Doab* regions too came under Maratha dominance. After Panipat Maratha power was again established in these regions.

Contemporary Marathi literature in form of correspondences could be used for reconstructing the historical geography of the regions, covered in the process of Maratha expansion in the North. These correspondences left behind by the Maratha army commanders and their associates, writing to their concerned officials & superiors at Poona court, and later on those of Maratha sardars Shinde and Holkar abound in day to day reports on movement and developments in the Maratha camps. Details on topography while Maratha army was on the march from South to North helps in understanding Maratha state formation in Central India much better, there are numerous correspondences, narrating tackling of the topography by scores of highly mobile Maratha bands and central Maratha army as it moved from its bases and camps. Thus processes of Maratha expansion across the Vindhya Ranges and Narmada River and further North in Rajasthan, Delhi-Agra and Doab beyond Chambal and Yamuna rivers were determined by the challenges that the tracts and the mighty rivers provided on the while crossing them. Today in the era of all weather roads it is difficult to understand the challenges thrown by natural barriers to a marching army. But in those days local elite who controlled strategic entry points like fords on the river and way through mountain passes held the key, for establishing regular transport and communication in the forward areas beyond those barriers, this can not be negated. Fords on Narmada and Mukundra pass were the gateways to Malwa and Rajasthan respectively. So were the role of several other geographical features like trade and military routes, forts and fortresses, forests & ravines as local military strongholds.

The impact of nature and local topography in Maratha expansion in the North can not be overlooked and will become much clearer from the discussion that unfolds on basis of the readings from Maratha and English accounts. Flooded Ganga and Yamuna Rivers proved quite a setback for the Marathas whose logistics was badly affected as they were trapped and couldn't chase Abdali's army in the Doab region. It

¹ Tod, James, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Delhi, 1971, Vol.1, p. 8, see the foot note; Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India*, 2 Vols., New Delhi, 1970

was Narmada River that lay on the way to marching Maratha army when they were aiming to conquer Malwa and regions further North.

Stepping out of their homeland for the military campaigns after finishing agriculture work and celebrating *Dussehra* festival, as numerous Marathi documents mentions was not just symbolic but a practice that followed the law of nature too. Incessant rains from June to August, knee deep slush on marching tracks in the routes and flooded rivers made it difficult for the army to move along with all the baggage. So was the role of topography of each and every place on way to the final destination. Rivers were fordable only at some places. Mountain passes were only way to cross over an otherwise rugged and thorny terrain. Green patches or forest cover served as fodder for draft animals. Maratha army attempting a campaign followed a well known route in the region passing through fords and mountain passes. Local elites controlling these places were important allies for any army attempting to conquer areas lying beyond these barriers. Forts, fortresses (military stronghold) and fortalices from where local elites controlled their surrounding areas were another important landmark that a Marching army had to pass through. *Garh/garhi* or local strongholds as they were known as, became important for any army as they could be used for all types of military function from store house for food supplies, water, depot of arms and ammunitions, for lodging royal members of the chief during war (Nawal Singh family lodged in a suitable fort see Holkar Kharita records) they also acted as prison for the enemies of the states etc. This last feature in the topography was a typical man made feature through out western India and played an important role in setting the equations between the Maratha sardars and the local elite in the area. There were different kinds of forts- hill fort (Jodhpur, Kalinjar, Asirgarh), desert fort (Merta, Nagore), mud fort (Gohad, Bharatpur), plain fort (Agra, Aligarh) that Maratha army tackled. Many more forts and fortalices lay on the way when Maratha army marched from South to North. Control over them meant control over the local elite.

So Maratha state formation in Central and North India during the 18th Century has to be first seen as countering these barriers, a complex network of geographical and man made strongholds in the region.

Also it is important to note that state formation in Central and North India had never been attempted on such a grand scale by a power moving towards North from the South. For the first time Marathas were marching against the natural course, most often rulers from North had marched to South. Whether it was Alauddin Khalji,

Muhammad bin Tughlaq or lately the Mughals under Aurangzeb. Marathas were the only powerful group located beyond Narmada River and Vindhya hill ranges that marched towards North to conquer Central India, Rajasthan and *Doab* regions during the Eighteenth Century. Marching through the local terrain in the frontier regions they confronted a different kind of challenge about which in the beginning they had little idea; geographical boundaries, twist and turn in the local topography and numerous natural obstacles they had to cross over before challenging the power of the local elite. Flooded Yamuna before the Battle of Panipat proved a natural setback to Maratha army's movements during the rainy season.¹ The swollen Yamuna forbade any action in the *Doab* against Abdali as Bhau's army lay encamped on its southern bank from 12th August to 10th October 1760 till the time river became fordable.²

In the early phases during the campaigns Maratha light horse moved over these unknown terrain in large bodies, capable of covering long distances very quickly as they had little baggage, munitions or food supplies to carry.³ In the beginning only weapon they carried were a lance and a sword.....they had no fire arms/muskets by then. They wore little cloth on their body too. In contrast when they were heavily loaded with baggage during the Panipat campaign of 1760-61, they had to pay the price, also because out of 'two lakh Marathas assembled at Panipat –two third of these were non-combatants'.⁴ Mahadji Shinde shed all heavy baggage after setback at Lalsot in 1787, sent back heavy guns and women to Gwalior.⁵

Along with fast movement of their army Maratha communication network too was strong that allowed faster supplies and reinforcements in forward areas. Marathas maintained regular communication network between forces fighting in the forward areas as well as those stationed at the outposts (*thanas*) with the camps of the Maratha sardars in their locality and their central leadership at Poona, Indore, Ujjain or Mathura. Maratha *vakil* at Kota, Gulgule coordinated with Maratha revenue officials

¹ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, 1972, Vol. 2, p. 174

² Ibid., pp. 186-187

³ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, 1972, Vol.4, p.102 and thus scored over the Mughal army by making "lightning raids". In 1735 Mughal army suffered defeat at the hands of Shinde and Holkar on Rajasthan –Malwa borders precisely due to their ability to harass Mughal army by their lightning raids. For full detail of this battle See Sarkar, J N, *Fall of The Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, New Delhi, 1971, pp.157-158

⁴ Sardesai G S, NHM, Bombay, 1958, Vol.2, pp.432-433

⁵ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. 3, pp.267-268; *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Idem., p.14

(kamavisdars) placed at various *thanas* in Mewad, Kota, Bundi, Rajgarh. While Maratha officials faced Jat onslaught at various outposts in North Malwa and neighbouring Bundelkhand they were regularly communicating their position and their requirements - need for reinforcements and lack of supplies and ammunitions to local Maratha Sardar Vishwas Rao Laxman at Jhanshi. On Vishwas Rao's feedback from Gwalior of serious reverses suffered by Maratha troops only Poona court later decided to send reinforcements under Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna.¹

Many times bankers accompanying Marathas travelled faster with the news from the Maratha camps to South. After Panipat disaster on 14th January Peshwa Balaji Bajirao intercepted a banker's private messenger coming from North on 24 January at Bhilsa in Malwa. He was carrying a letter which indicated by metaphors that something serious had happened to the fighting Maratha force. Metaphors relating to jewellery read: "*two pearls dissolved, twenty five gold mohurs have been lost and of the silver and copper the total number cannot be cast up*" indicating Maratha loss at Panipat.² As two pearls indicated Sadashivrao Bhau, Peshwa's brother and Vishwasrao his eldest son, the gold *mohurs* stood for his sardars and silver and copper stood for captains and soldiers.

It is interesting to find out how much distance a marching army of the Marathas with all its baggage covered in one day. Marathi correspondences uses a standard term for the distance covered from one outpost to the next calling it *majal dar majal* i.e., stage after stage travel by a traveller without stopping.³ *Majal* referred to one stage of the journey/travel being undertaken. One *Darmajal* was equivalent to 12 kos/24 miles/38.4 km. That Marathas had acquired knowledge about territories into which they were planning to launch their military campaign also comes to light from their correspondences.

A Marathi document from the *Peshwa Daftar* of the year 1733 mentions local names of the areas falling under Bundelkhand region and bordering Malwa suba. Bundelkhand itself is referred as *Dashanarv Desh*. Narwar is called as *Naishad Desh Rajanal*, Bodase was known as *Vaarunavat Bhishmache*, Chanderi was known as

¹ SPD (New Series), P M Joshi(ed.). 1962, Vol.3, See L.112 to L.174

² Sardesai, G S, *NewHistory of the Marathas*, Bombay, 1958, Vol.2, p.465

³ See the entry for *majal dar majal* in *Molesworth Marathi English Dictionary*

Chaidh Desh Raja Shishupal, Datia was called *Bhadawar Desh*, Gwalior was called as *Brijmandal Desh*.¹

Moreover, by this time the marching army had mapped the stages and total distance in *kos* for the march of armies into Northern India. As the Maratha traveller in a document of 1733 from *Peshwa Daftar* recorded each stage of his journey starting from Rajgarh near Jhanshi to Poona that he finished in 47 days covering 320 *kos* or about 640 miles/1024km; making it 7 *kos*/14miles/22.4 km per day but whether it was on foot or horseback is not clear.² But most likely it was on horseback. Kashi Bai's entourage while on pilgrimage to Banaras & Allahabad in 1746-47 covered 5 to 6 *kos* distance each day.³

Geographical spread of the Marathas was also enhanced by movement of civilian population once the Maratha army had subdued the local elite. The camp followers and later on pilgrims, bankers, traders, merchants, *Banjaras*, *Gosains* (worshippers of Shiva) and the *Pindaris* joined them in conquered areas. As they moved under the protection of Maratha army or that of its local ally it added to Maratha expansion in the North. Pilgrimage to areas outside Maharashtra by Peshwa family⁴ and other Maratha pilgrims was next to military and trading community's movement from South to North. Kashi Bai, Balaji Bajirao's mother while going to Banaras on pilgrimage in 1746 was accompanied by a large number of men including a security force led by a *sardar* named Visaji Dadaji.⁵ Later Kashi Bai and Visaji Dadaji asked for 2000 strong contingent to escort her from Kalpi onwards⁶ as Bundelkhand was in a disturbed condition.⁷ During Shinde and Holkar's presence in the North ordinary persons too went for pilgrimage under escort provided by the arranged by these sardars in cooperation with the local elite in whose area they traveled. There are several instances described in *kharitas* referring to pilgrims visiting Pushkar, Nathdwara, Mathura and other places nearby the Jaipur state.⁸ So

¹ *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar*, Vol.14, G S Sardesai (ed.), Bombay, 1931, No.7/24-5-1733

² *SPD*, Vol.14, No.7/24-5-1733, The document is unique, Jhansi to Poona each and every outpost is described along with the arrival date at each outpost, See Appendix at the end of this chapter.

³ *SPD* (New Series) Vol.1, P M Joshi(ed.), Bombay, 1957, No.72/17-4-1746

⁴ *Ibid.*, No.68/18-1-1746

⁵ *Ibid.*, No.68/18-1-1746 & No.69/4-4-1746

⁶ *Ibid.*, No.71-72/17-4-1746

⁷ *Ibid.*, No.70/4-4-1746

⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 102, Aasoj Sudi 7, 1842/1787; *Gwalior Kharita* No. 69, Sawan Badi 9, 1854/1797;

was the case of traders, merchants, astrologers and learned people venturing out. Jaipur state was asked to provide escort to these pilgrims and travellers in course of their journey within the state.¹

For better transport of their supplies in the ever shifting camps Marathas hired the services of local groups. For the grain supplies to their camps Marathas hired the services of Banjaras, a local tribal community engaged in trading of goods and services in those days. When this practice started is yet not established but particularly during their campaigns in Rajasthan in 1780s and 1790s, Banjaras played a key role in times of war in maintaining supplies of food and other essential items, probably arms and ammunitions too.² Banjaras brought grain & fruit from Gwalior during the Lalsot campaign as per the Persian news letters of the Lalsot campaign.³ Faqir Khair-ud-din Allahabadi in his *Ibratnamah* reports a grain convoy of 6,000 oxen and 700 camels coming to Shinde's camp from the eastern side.⁴ Even they brought seven camels loaded with *mohars* and rupees to Shinde's camp at Lalsot from Gwalior in 1787.⁵ In July 1787 during the Lalsot Campaign Mahadji presented scarf (*shela*) and turban (*pagoti*) to the Banjara chief.⁶ Shinde certainly was trying to reiterate his faith in this local group and expected better cooperation with Banjaras in transport of supplies to the grain markets in his camp near Lalsot, when prices had gone up. "5 *seers* of flour, 6 *seers* of barley, 5 *seers* of *dal*, 7 *seers* of *bajra* and *jawar* were being sold for a *Nana Shahi* rupee".⁷ Further Shinde also abolished octroi duty (*mahsul*) to please the Banjaras.⁸

Pindaris famous for their loot and plunder as they followed Maratha camps appeared as a part of Maratha army raising their number and created terror amongst the local population. They engaged in loot of animals and other items from the rival camps. During the Lalsot campaign Hiru Pindara accompanying Shinde's camp was

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 12 Bhadon Badi 1, 1827/1770; *Gwalior Kharita* No.127, Ashad Badi 9, 1829/1772

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar, J N(trans &ed), pp.2,14

³ *Ibid.*,

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.60

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.4

⁷ *Ibid.*,

⁸ *Ibid.*,

reported lifting many animals from the rival Jaipur camp.¹ They made the Maratha army look much more threatening as they indulged in loot and plunder once the Maratha camp moved forward. Holkar's army in the later stages had a substantial number of Pindaris following their camps.

The Maratha camp in the North attained huge size at later stages. When the army moved it was like a city moving from one place to the other with all sorts of people in the bandwagon from bankers, traders, shopkeepers, astrologers, with separate markets for each type of commodity. All kinds of goods sold in the market besides the Maratha camp. C W Malet, British Resident with Marathas aptly describes the scene at one such camp that spread over the space of 12 miles, the Bazaar formed a very long broad street to the tent of the chief, where shopkeepers, handicrafts and every species of profession carry on their callings² Maratha presence in the North is visible more in their camps than in conquest and consolidations(in the Mughal style) by tracing the presence and posting of their officials *Sar-Subhadar*, *Kamavisdars* and *Mamlatdars* in the parganas. From these camps Maratha sardars also collected taxes from chiefs located nearby, after victory at Patan & Merta in 1790 over Jaipur and Jodhpur forces, Mahadji's stay in Rajasthan fits above descriptions as he halted at several places collecting money from local chieftains.³ Marathas mobility in the given geographical space during the long time span of their stay in the North reveals much more about the limited options they had. Given the fact that during the later part of the Mughal period *jagirdars* and *zamindars* by maximizing revenue demand had already impoverished the farmers especially in the Deccan, Marathas needed to be on the move and survive by collecting whatever money they could manage in an age of great disturbance in the North. For Marathas it was also necessary to adjust with other powers and survive within the narrow geographical limits in the North, they couldn't go back to Maharashtra, other powers

¹ Ibid.,

² C W Malet's *Memoranda on the Maratha Army* quoted by Jadunath Sarkar in *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, pp.206-207

³ See *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, pp.45-58 several incidences of Mahadji collecting money from local Rajput chiefs are mentioned from the Persian News letters, on p.45 it reads, "In every march of Mahadji Sindhia, Ambaji and Deshmukh with the fauj and guns used to go ahead and collect 2 or 3 lakhs from the villages and garhis of Shekhavati, such as Madhogarh, etc., and bring away grain and cattle and hostages for contributions." This was also because as per *Kharita* details Marathas had failed to collect much from Rajputs by peaceful means

couldn't be conquered Shinde and Holkar had to co-exist with the English in the East, Sikhs in the North, Gaikwads in Gujarat and Bhonsles in South -East.

Thus Maratha army didn't march alone, local people also joined as Banjaras found employment in their company, Pindaries made a living, shopkeepers and merchants followed the camp selling their products. Marathas themselves had their wives and relatives with them; in 1788 all of them were cast off and sent to Ujjain as Marathas were facing reverses.

Let us recreate the picture of an area under control of the local elite. In the Eighteenth Century milieu, residences and headquarters of the local chieftains of Central India stood over hilltops and hillocks in closely guarded fortifications. Beyond the numerous forts and fortalices dotting the length and width of the region lay rolling fertile agricultural tracts of the *ryots* and their villages. There were smaller fortifications called *garhis* of his subordinates too, in the nearby locality. This whole area was approached by one or more military and trade route connecting it to the headquarters of the regional political power and local trade and commerce center.

Above description suited the area occupied by Khichis of Raghogarh in Central India during the 18th century. Khichis state came up during the Mughal period with its capital at Raghogarh, 40 miles away in the north-west from the major commercial centre Sironj. Sironj lay on the Agra-Gwalior-Burhanpur route with regular military and trade convoys passing by. Khichis domain extended up to Betwa river in the East to Andheri River, a tributary of Parvati in the west. They had under their sway several local petty chieftains. Later as Maratha came to Malwa Khichis had to become a Maratha tributary. "With the expansion of Maratha rule over Malwa, a shorter route to the Deccan was opened, leaving the royal highway at Shivpuri, 65 miles south west of Gwalior, and turning south-westwards to Ujjain and Indore."¹ Both Shinde and Holkar made Khichis their tributary during the period of Maratha rule in Malwa but Khichi's unique position in the regional setting made them important local elite due to their presence near the main highway from North to South.

Central India comprising of three constituent geographical regions of Malwa, Khandesh and Bundelkhand, had a mix of rich agricultural tracts dotted with numerous forts and fortalices sitting over hilltops and close to a perennial source of

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, 1973, Vol.3, p.212

water either a big pond, a stream, a rivulet or a local river. Further, headquarters of locally powerful groups were very close to thriving trade and commerce centers all along the famous Surat- Burhanpur- Agra trade route and another route bifurcating from Burhanpur to Ujjain, going up to Ajmer in Rajasthan. For Marathas, to have access to this famous trade route of those days, Maratha army had to first control nearby fort of Asirgarh controlled by a Mughal *Faujdar*. Narmada River was another big challenge as Maratha army could only cross over the mighty river at a ford near Barwaghat controlled by a local chieftain Nandlal Chaudhuri. In 1715, nearly 10,000 Marathas are described crossing the Narmada River at Barwaghat and demanding tribute for the last three years from the *amil* of Kampel but he managed to flee to Ujjain, the Mughal headquarter for *Suba* Malwa. In his absence Nandlal Chaudhuri negotiated with the Marathas by providing them two horses and some cash. Holkar's Marathi records from 1720-1731 shows that Malhar Rao Holkar was regularly in touch with Nandlal and the latter was paying tribute before a Maratha revenue collector replaced him.

Areas south of Chambal were safe bases once the Maratha forces subdued local powers. Here they recharged themselves for fresh campaigns as well as took refuge after hectic warfare, as it happened after the famous Lalsot campaign of 1787 against Jaipur ruler. Seriously challenged and retreating Maratha forces took refuge in the areas south of Chambal River.

Marathas were not so successful in reducing Jat territory in the Bharatpur-Dholpur region of strong mud fortifications developed by Jat ruler Surajmal. Mud forts of Kumbher and Dig defied gun attacks and Holkar family lost its future ruler Khanderao during the battle near Kumbher. Gohad was another such mud fortification in the east. Holkar laid a siege to reduce Gohad Jats in 1765 but died a year later without having full control over them. Holkar seem to have mobilized his whole armed strength to capture Gwalior and Gohad areas in cooperation with his daughter –in- law Ahilyabai (arranging for supply of ammunitions). But the operation had to be abandoned when even Raghunath Rao who joined later, failed to reduce Gohad fortifications. Shinde could conquer it after prolonged warfare and huge expenditure.

Ranthambor fort which was crucial for any power trying to control Rajasthan was made over to Madho Singh in 1753 by the Mughals.¹ And since then it remained the bone of contention between the Marathas and the Jaipur ruler.² Ranthambor was the gate way to Rajasthan. Forts under Maratha control acted not only as garrison for the army but also as prison for keeping his enemies, and even as state treasury for storing wealth. Agra was within Shinde's sphere of influence, a garrison town where even his general Perron lodged his family as late as 1803 before seeking protection from British.³ Aligarh had also become Shinde's garrison town where Perron also had a *jaydad* given by Shinde for maintaining his troops. Aligarh was a strong fort and well garrisoned. On 4th September 1803 Aligarh was lost from Maratha possession by the storming of the British forces.⁴ Beyond Agra in the east Shinde was not in control and British forces were powerful in the 1790s and the first decade of the 19th century. Whereas Shinde's European officers who had shown dissent and become prisoners were lodged in the Agra fort.⁵ Khichi chief Balwant Singh was confined to Gwalior fort after he surrendered.⁶ When Agra Fort was stormed on 10th October 1803 and English force evacuated Maratha forces on 18th October they took possession of a treasure worth rupees 25 lakhs from the fort compound.⁷

¹ Shastri, R P, *op.cit.*, p.38

² *Gwalior Kharita* No 165, Magh Sudil, 1815/1758; *Gwalior Kharita* No.166, Posh Badi10,1815/1758

³ Smith, L F, *op.cit.*, p. 33

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.38

⁶ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.211

⁷ L F Smith, *op.cit.*, p.39

CHAPTER 2

ROLE OF THE LOCAL ELITES IN MARATHA EXPANSION IN THE NORTH

Local elites played a vital role in the process of state formation in pre-modern times. State formation hinged on local support from the powerful zamindars and chieftains enjoying caste and kinship based solidarity in their own areas along with the superior rights over the landholdings. Mughal Empire itself heavily relied on a network of zamindars and autonomous chiefs for extension of its power and authority in the outlying *subas* and their rural surroundings. Expansion of Maratha power outside Maharashtra in the North was a function of control over the locally powerful elements defined as *Zamindar* in the Mughal period. Maratha expansion in the North was a continuous process due to making and unmaking of conquests in several areas. Locally powerful elements reasserted their power after Maratha army marched away from the area. Maratha tribute collectors with few armed retainers found it difficult to hold on to the conquered or subjugated territory especially after the Battle of Panipat. Instances of willful cooperation in formation of Maratha state are as significant as those of opposition and armed resistance through out the period of Maratha expansion beyond Narmada. The internal strengths and behaviour of the local elites in the core region of Central India and in the periphery or frontier regions of Rajasthan, Delhi-Agra-Bharatpur and *Doab* regions, while studying Maratha expansion, is the central theme of this chapter.

Firstly it is important to analyse the position of the local elites in their own locality as a class by going back to the Mughal time before mapping their location in various regions of Maratha expansion and their interface with Maratha army during the 18th Century. It is important to ask what made these local elites so vital in their locality that both Mughal & Marathas depended on them in expansion of their networks in the distant areas far away from the Mughal or Maratha centre. From Maratha perspective, it was during the long and peaceful Mughal period that the local elites popularly known as zamindars in the Mughal documents assumed powerful position by forming a body of armed retainers and raising their land holdings in their locality.

The Mughal Empire and the Local Elites

Irfan Habib's study of the *zamindars* and autonomous chiefs during the Mughal period is quite relevant in this context. Zamindars during the Mughal period itself had started acquiring strongholds, "Every *zamindar* built a fort or fortress to protect his possessions. It was normal for every *zamindar* to raise a fort.¹ Thus the country was dotted with innumerable forts and fortresses.² "The forts were the visible symbols of the armed power of the zamindars. They served them as strongholds, garrison-houses and bases."³ Mughal authorities were not concerned so long as these strongholds were used to collect revenue from the local peasantry. The *zamindar's* fort was the symbol of his determination to defend the land inherited from his ancestors. Mughals only got alarmed when zamindars started using these strongholds in the outlying areas to defy the superior authority or the rival power in the region during the later days of Aurangzeb's reign.

Besides forts another source of strength for these *zamindars* was the contingent of loyal armed retainers who rallied around them in times of external threat to their possessions. The peasants with their large numbers probably never left him short of armed retainers to defend his boundaries. These armed retainers were bound by caste and kinship ties with the *zamindar* of their locality -a *tappa*, *taluka* or *pargana* those days inhabited by *zamindar* own kins and castemen. But some *zamindars* did enlist mercenaries belonging to other castes or communities; this became much more true as the period advanced.⁴ However, the peasants with their large numbers formed the majority of the foot soldiers in *zamindar's* body of troops. Four million was the estimated number of retainers with the zamindars during the Mughal period.⁵

The strength and weaknesses of the *zamindar* class was reflected in the type of armed power it commanded.⁶ Habib aptly describes limitations of *zamindar's* strength, "the numerically dominant infantry accorded the *zamindar*

¹ Habib, Irfan, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707*, Oxford, 1999, p.204

² Ibid. '

³ Ibid., pp.204-205

⁴ In the second half of 18th century Gohad Jats hired even European mercenaries during the period of Maratha expansion as did the Jats of Bharatpur and even the Jaipur ruler once hired a European mercenary

⁵ Habib, Irfan, op.cit., pp.202,207

⁶ Habib, Irfan, op.cit., p.207

purely local ambition and the absence of any great desire on his part for mobility or long - range operations. Accordingly, his strength in cavalry, the arm most necessary for mobile warfare, was usually far weaker. The *zamindar* had hardly one horseman for ten foot –soldiers.”¹ This situation must have improved over the years. Still this probably was a weakness that Marathas exploited to their hilt. Both Shinde and Holkar were master of lightning raids on their enemies and guerilla warfare launched from their horseback.

Another weakness that engrossed the *zamindar* class was their divided nature, they were so narrowly bound by their caste and local ties that they could never form into a united governing class and create an empire.²

Towards the beginning of the 18th century weakening of the Mughal power provided enough political space for locally powerful group to revive their caste and kinship based ties to emerge as centres of power at various levels in their own region and locality. This was true especially about those zamindars and chieftains who had faced the oppressive Mughal *Jagirdars* and other imperial officials in the areas under imperial administration. A period of great financial pressure from the local *jagirdars* trying to extract as much as they could towards the end of Aurangzeb’s reign had left the local zamindars in state of rebellion, towards the Mughal authorities. Such local elements were first to crossover to the Maratha side as the Mughal hold over Malwa *suba* began to weaken and Maratha campaigns started in Khandesh and Malwa regions.

Also during the last days of Mughal domination in Malwa and other outlying *subas* a much different power equation in their locality worked in favour of those *zamindars* who held lands. Thus Mughal power structure crumbled in the *subas* but significance of local *zamindars* was intact as they assumed independent positions in their locality.

Taking Irfan Habib’s concept of Mughal *zamindars* to 18th Century situations there was now crystallisation of their position in Mughal subas far away from the imperial centre with the breakdown of the Mughal Empire’s political network. Erstwhile Mughal *zamindars* now assumed *defacto* independent status in

¹ Ibid.,

² Ibid., p. 208, Habib adds, “This incapacity on the part of the most powerful indigenous class may provide us with at least one explanation of why the main impetus towards empire building in medieval India came so repeatedly from foreign conquerors and immigrants.”

their own locality with the breakdown of Mughal politico-administrative structure in far off *subas* like Khandesh, Malwa, Bundelkhand, Rajasthan, *Doab* and Awadh region.

This was on lines of R G Fox and Bernard Cohn's arguments for political formations at regional and local levels during the 18th century in the outlying areas, earlier closely tied to a political centre.¹

The case of the local elites of Malwa *suba* and adjoining areas of Bundelkhand was typical of above generalizations. Rajputs from Rajasthan who were assigned holdings as Mughal *jagirdars* during the Mughal period assumed independent political positions as rulers of small principalities, in their own regions and locality, as Mughal network started crumbling in Malwa *suba* during the 18th century.

Raghubir Singh's writings on Malwa's political elites at the beginning of 18th century echoes the same view point, "those who became powerful enough to maintain their fiefs in the last days of Mughal rule, slowly usurped other powers too and in the anarchy which followed the weakening of the Mughal hold, they became full-fledged states and thus exercised all sorts of power."²

Also for many of the locally powerful elements in far off areas some degree of freedom had always been there because of their location in the region of relative isolation separated by rivers, mountains, forests and other possible geographical barriers. Bundela Rajputs and Gohad Jats and numerous other smaller chieftains formed this category at the time of Maratha expansion.

Local elites as these *zamindars* are referred to here were gaining as potentially powerful elements as time passed since the death of Aurangzeb, the last powerful Mughal ruler. Being far away from Delhi, the Mughal centre that was loosing its hold over outlying areas and the reigning *subadar* also having no great control over them, local elites in Khandesh, southern Malwa and Bundelkhand regions were free to indulge with an outside power in their neighbourhood.

Growing assertion of authority, on the part of the local Rajput *zamindars* of Malwa and Bundelkhand which undermined the Mughal administrative and

¹ Cohn, Bernard S., 'Political Systems in Eighteenth Century India: The Banaras Region', reprint in *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*, Oxford, 1992; Fox, Richard G., *Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule: State-Hinterland Relations in Pre-industrial India*, Berkeley, 1971

² Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition or A Century of Anarchy, The First Phase, 1698-1765*, Bombay, 1936, p.72

political control requires to be understood in the historical backdrop of waning Mughal control in the outlying provinces, especially after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D.

The Mughal court had become the centre of divisive forces from within; nobles were divided into rival groups and often contested the authority of Aurangzeb's weak successors. Nobles influenced decisions taken in the name of the Mughal ruler according to the interest of their own group. Out in the provinces the dependent local elite as well as the Mughal official's realising infighting at the centre and weakness of the ruler to assert himself over the nobles, started looking for new sources of strength and security in their own region/surroundings and hence shifted their loyalty, though independent existence remained their main objective/ aspiration. The weak successors of Aurangzeb found it very hard to regain the earlier effective control over the local elites i.e., *zamindars* and other emerging social groups like the Jats, Bundelas and the Marathas in the provinces even by trying persons of merit as *subadars*. Co-operation from the local officials in the provinces left much to be desired, *jagirdars* and *faujdars* concentrated more on acquiring personal wealth and position in the *subas* than meeting the expectations of the reigning *subadar*. In the first quarter of the 18th Century Mughal ruler's authority over the provinces began to be contested by the local elites in alliance with the emerging regional powers.

In Maharashtra Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath and Chhatrapati Sahu regained control over the earlier "*Maratha Swarajya*" from the Mughals by uniting the independently operating Maratha families. The first phase of Maratha expansion started from Maharashtra across the Narmada River was to face such a lot of local Rajputs in Malwa, quite disenchanted with Mughals in the recent past and now quite responsive to positive vibes from another centre of power to regain their local power and position.

Formation of the Local Elite of Malwa during the Mughal Period

Malwa was the region that saw formation of local elites during the Mughal period largely to aid Mughal Politico-administrative structure in the region. The social and political structure of this region was the deciding factor in building up of Mughal political and administrative set up in the 16th and 17th centuries. Its proximity to earlier Rajput dominated regions in the north and west prior to the

first Muslim invasions, led to the regular migration of the Rajput chiefs since “7th and 8th Century, when they were dominating the whole of India” and later “when the first rush of the Muslims in India swept many of them from the North,”¹ “The original and aboriginal tribes Bhils and Meenas in the western and north-west Malwa regions and Gonds in the southern tracts”² were driven in the “hilly, rocky, drier marginal areas”³ by these Rajput settlers from “well watered fertile land” of Malwa in this process, which went on till late in the Mughal period. In the pre-Mughal and Mughal period migration of Rajputs from Rajasthan continued. Sultanate and then the Mughal rulers granted them land in these conquered areas, so that the central authority could control these outlying areas by availing their co-operation in protecting Mughal outposts, maintain general law and order and use them as collectors of revenue from local peasants, merchants and artisans of the area. Mughal governor of the province on behalf of the Mughal ruler used to issue an official order to the Rajput chief relating to this matter raising his position among the landholder of that area to that of village headman or *chaudhri*. *Pargana* level Mughal official were in direct touch with these zamindars, seeking their co-operation in revenue collection from the village in the area. They were also asked to organize an armed contingent corresponding to their financial position as the holder of the *watan jagir* which co-operated with the royal Mughal administration and control in this outlying province of Malwa was heavily dependent on co-operation of the local Rajputs through out the 16th and 17th Century.⁴ The Afghans, who had ruled over Malwa in the pre-Mughal period, had lost their dominance to the local Rajputs and later on to the Mughals, and were now mainly settled in towns.⁵ However, the above picture drawn of the local elite in the Mughal period would incorporate hundreds of Rajput Chiefs and other Rajputs who had settled in Malwa as land holders, but a selected group was enjoying the status of *zamindars*

¹ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.11

² Ibid., see also , Ziegler, Norman P., ‘Some Notes on Rajput Loyalties during the Mughal Period’, in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* edited by J.F. Richards, Wisconsin-Madison, 1978, p.225 where Ziegler writes “Examples of the movement of individual Rajputs from area to area within Rajasthan and outside appear frequently in Rajput literature.... And point to an important and enduring feature of the society.”

³ Gordon, Stewart N. , ‘Recovery from Adversity in Eighteenth- Century India: Re-thinking Villages, Peasants, and Politics in Pre-modern Kingdom’, pp.101, 105 in *Maratha, Marauders and State Formation in Eighteenth Century India*, Delhi, 1994

⁴ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, pp. 16, 72

⁵ Ibid., pp.13, 73

amongst whom the first settlers had come in this region in the early medieval period. Hence there were distinctions within the Rajput population of this region in that period, majority of the ancient settlers of the early medieval period “had lost touch with their places of origin and had made Malwa their homeland, they had taken to agriculture and some of them had lost their purity as they married in the families of the pre-existing local elements like Bhils and Others”.¹ Even those who “continued to guard the purity of their blood”² and were land holders and (were) quite powerful and were not treated on terms of equality by the new immigrants”³ of the Mughal period. Lately “the local Rajputs began to be recruited in the armed contingent of the new Rajputs,⁴ as battle against the Marathas prolonged in the last quarter of the 17th Century and in our own period when their own survival was at stake in the Malwa province. The case of Bundela Rajputs was just the opposite, as D.H.A. Kolff has traced their peasant background along with the *Purbiya* and *Ujjainiya* Rajputs of East Malwa and Bundelkhand. They were locals or migrants from the East i.e., Awadh, Bihar and Varanasi region and were not the descendants of any of the Rajput clan of North India or Rajasthan. They acquired Rajput status through their service as armed peasants as soldiers under the leadership of local zamindars to the Mughal Empire.”⁵

Many of the Rajput settlers of the Mughal period in the Malwa *suba* were relatives of those families of Rajasthan which were already in service of the Mughal ruler. The distinguished services of these families in the Mughal government led to new assignments to their kin in the different areas of Malwa. As Raghubir Singh writes,

“The introduction of the new Rajput elements in Malwa, ... may well be ascribed to a definite Mughal policy to colonise Malwa with those Rajputs who had proved to be the most faithful and loyal adherents of the Mughal empireHence, they went on making grants in Malwa to the younger sons and brothers of the Rajput princes of Rajputana, and thus colonized Malwa with a new set of Rajputs. Akbar created the Khichi state of Bajranggarh (now

¹ Ibid., p.12

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p.20

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Kolff, Dirk H.A., *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850*, Cambridge, 1990, It's the core of Kolff's argument about the role of peasantry as armed soldiers in the formation of states in Northern India between 1450 to 1850

known as Raghogarh). Shah Jahan created Kotah and granted Ratlam and other parganas in its neighbourhood to Ratan Singh Rathore, and Aurangzib granted Badnawar to Raja Bhim Singh, brother of Maharana Jai Singh, and created the Rathor state of Sitamau by fresh grant after confiscating that of Ratlam.”¹

Stewart Gordon cites a similar case of Jhabua state in south-western Malwa colonized by Keshodas, descendant of one Ram Singh, a Rajput and resident of Ajmer, who was serving in the Mughal army in the period of Akbar and Jahangir through service grants.²

Aurangzeb’s period, however, witnessed maximum Rajput chiefs settling in Malwa as there were growing signs of turbulence in those years in the province, the Jats and the Gonds; old set of Rajputs and the Afghans started raising their heads against the imperial authorities in different area; these new Rajput chiefs were to control local elements in their area of settlement and rescue the provincial structure from crumbling.³ These Rajput Chiefs whose accounts are most detailed in the accounts of the English administrators⁴ along with some earlier migrants had continued to be loyal through their services to the Mughal ruler and formed the majority among the local elite of Malwa in the last years of Aurangzeb’s reign.

Rajput chiefs of Malwa had migrated from Rajasthan side because many of them “could not be accommodated respectfully in their home territory held by their own kins as chieftains; as Rajput chief’s territory was not divisible amongst the sons and brothers; and thus the younger brothers faced the problem of being totally sidelined”.⁵ These kin members of the different Rajput houses generally younger brothers and sons of the “many wives and concubines” of the Rajput chiefs left their ancestral homeland on their own and came to settle down in marginal and unsettled areas of Malwa or were given service tenures in marginal, hilly or tracts

¹ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.74

² Gordon, Stewart N, ‘The Slow Conquest’, p.5

³ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, pp.14-15, here old Rajput Chiefs also include those settled in Mughal period and were showing rebellious attitude due to the weakening of the Mughal empire, later we will see even an Afghan Dost Mohammad Khan being sent to control one such group in south-east Malwa

⁴ Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India*, Vol. 1, pp.45-48, 463-526; Vol.2, pp.125-131

⁵ Gordon, Stewart N. , ‘Zones of Military Entrepreneurship in India, 1500-1750’, in *Maratha Marauders and State Formation*, pp.185-186, Habib, Irfan, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Delhi, 1999, pp.192-194, zamindaris were however divisible in other parts of the country

yet to be brought under Mughal control the request of their family members in the Mughal service or as rewards for distinguished services.¹ Another method by which Umat Rajputs in the north-west Malwa (whose origin was obscure) managed to survive in the group of privileged Rajput families of Malwa was by “getting son of one of their chiefs married to the daughter of a near relative of the prince of Udaipur”² because “the Odeypoor family [was]... considered the highest in rank, from their rule being the most ancient”.³

At the turn of the Century, dominions of these Rajput chiefs of Malwa were closely placed to each other, often sharing a common boundary with those of the neighbouring Rajput chiefs, in different areas of Malwa, still they looked to their places of origin and ancestral families in Rajasthan, ruling Udaipur, Jodhpur, Amber/Jaipur or other such states, for co-operation in succession disputes or in case of enmity with other elements or other Rajputs in the region.⁴ They remained detached from other local Rajput chiefs of their type on political matters due to their association with different parental clans of Rajasthan.⁵ Their ancestral families had grown into large compact states in Rajasthan in association with the Mughal empire and lost or loosened some of its traditional character, like strengthening of “ruler-client relationship during the 16th and 17th centuries at the expense of kinship as basis of organization” and development of “relationship based on service and exchange.... between ruler and his servants”.⁶ Looking across the border of Malwa *suba* rather than neighbouring Rajput chiefs thus had more than one reason of being of the same clan and caste, as they could provide better protection and greater co-operation due to their established position by the end of 17th century. And these Rajput chiefs of Malwa could do no more to strengthen themselves as they had no such unoccupied territorial expanse to colonise as their assigned areas, still it remained more or less co-extensive with a dozen *parganas*

¹ Gordon, Stewart N, ‘Zones of Military Entrepreneurship’, pp.185-186

² Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India*, Vol. 2, p.130-131, see the foot-note of Malcolm on p.131 where he writes, “Many of the principal families in Malwa, have since this connexion was formed, consented to eat with the Raja of Omutwarra,” abode of Umat Rajputs in Central Malwa; for its location in Malwa *suba*, See Raghubir Singh, *Malwa in Transition*, map of Malwa, 1695-1765 facing p.1

³ Ibid., p.128

⁴ Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.13

⁵ Sesodia, Rathor, Kachhawa etc.

⁶ Zeigler, Norman P., ‘Some Notes on Rajput Loyalties during the Mughal Period’, p.226.

or maximum a *sarkar* territory often interspersed with those of very small zamindars.¹

However with passing of time the Rajput chiefs' association with their ancestral families were of a limited nature and being "always internally autonomous"² left them on their own, on other aspects of territorial management and control. Because geographic mobility was hindered and limited in pre-modern times. As Raghubir Singh says, "the foundation of a principality meant localization of their interest and this meant their being cut off from greater avenues."³ This factor prevented greater unity among the Rajputs of Malwa and Rajasthan despite very close social and cultural ties. Like in Rajasthan here too these Rajput zamindars built strongholds, the *garhis* that covered their *deorhi* and *haveli* referred so many times in the Marathi newsletters as Maratha sardars campaigned against them in Malwa.

The Rajput chiefs of Malwa thus were closer to the Mughal officials of their *suba* and *sarkar* than their Rajput brothers in Rajasthan for all purposes. The service *jagirs* to the various Rajput *zamindars* incorporated Malwa *suba* in to the Mughal Empire. A weak Mughal ruler and the crisis in the existing system controlling them, could leave these chiefs independent but at the same time politically and strategically isolated from any other source of strength and protection especially the Princes from Rajputana. Sooner or later they were to look for a new protector whose fortunes were on the rise, especially after the death of Aurangzeb and Marathas were the only option for these Rajputs.

Rathor Rajputs of Sitamau

Case Study of a Local Elite's Formation and Relations with Shinde

Rathor state of Sitamau⁴ located in western Malwa provides an opportunity to study the impact of Maratha presence on the local elites during the period of Marathas control over Central India. Sitamau a small Rajput principality of Rathor clan took root in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Located on the

¹ Gordon, Stewart N., 'Kinship and Pargana in Eighteenth Century Khandesh', p. 395.

² Gordon, Stewart N., *The Marathas 1600-1818*, The New Cambridge History of India Series, Vol.II.4,Cambridge, 1993, p.114

³ Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.83

⁴ Barhat, Shivdattdan, *Sitamau Rajya ka Itihas*, Sitamau, 2002

western Borders of Malwa Plateau and nearby Mandsaur it was a relatively young state at the time of Maratha inroads in Malwa in the 1720s and 1730s. Sitamau's first ruler Keshav Das was a descendant of the Jodhpur ruler Mota Raja Uday Singh. Mahesh Das was assigned Jalor as *jagir* in 1642. His son Ratan Singh was given Ratlam as *jagir* in lieu of Jalor in 1656. He was killed in the battle of Dharmat in 1658. Till 1694 Ratlam was ruled by his family. But in that year due to killing of a Mughal official (Amin) Nasiruddin who misbehaved with local officials the *jagir* was sequestrated by Aurangzeb from Ratan Singh's descendant Keshav Das. Dispossed of his *jagir* Keshav Das moved towards Sitamau with his family. But he continued to be loyal to Aurangzeb and was promoted in the Mughal army as he now held 500 *Jat* and 400 *Sawar*, 300 *Do Aspa*. Soon Keshav Das was given a fresh Jagir of Titrod with annual income of 7, 80, 000 *dams* in the year 1701.¹

Its first ruler Keshav Das (1674-1731) faced Maratha invasions while serving the Mughals at Delhi court. First instance of Maratha presence in the area near Sitamau was reported to Keshav Das in Delhi in the year 1713.² But he used to visit his state on important and auspicious occasions as he did in November, 1714 for a ritual bathing in the rivers Chambal and Shipra on the day of lunar eclipse. But again he had to rush back to the Delhi court and he addressed a letter from there dating 12th of December 1714. At this time he promoted to 2000 *mansab* rank and his son was Bakht Singh was also honoured with headgear (*Siropav*).³ As a result of this promotion even more territorial assignment became a possibility and Alot pargana worth 23,46,000 dam in annual revenue was assigned to him in the year 1715 through a *sanad* dated 1st November 1715. Total income from the *jagir* held by Keshav Das became of 53, 66,400 *dam*.⁴

As the ruler of Sitamau was away most of the time at Delhi court the management of the *jagir* was in the hands of the trusted men of the ruler whom Keshav Das used to instruct from time to time about how to look after the *jagir*. Diwan appointed by the ruler was the administrative head. To secure the boundaries of his Jagir and to better manage administrative affairs in his absence a

¹ Ibid., p.21

² Ibid., p.32

³ *State Papers of Sitamau (English Translation)*, Shri Natnagar Shodh Sansthan, Sitamau, p.54;

⁴ Ibid.,; Barhat, Shivdattdan, op. cit., p.31

Faujdar was also appointed by Keshav Das. Appointment of *jagirdars* to settle and populate areas under the estate boundaries by appointing his own relatives and trusted men too were taking place.

In the second and third decades of the 18th century Marathas were active in the Malwa *suba* and they also entered boundaries of Sitamau state probably also reached up to Laduna, the residence (*haveli*) and stronghold of the ruler Keshav Das.¹

The ruler was most of the time attending the Delhi court is evident from the letters written by his two sons Bakht Singh and Gaj Singh from Delhi in the year 1724 and 1725 and it is also conjectured that Bakht Singh came back to manage his family properties and younger son now joined his father at Delhi in 1725.² However Bakht Singh died in the year 1731 on 8th of March at Sitamau. And soon after the very next month his father Keshav Das also died in Delhi probably due to shock that he received from his son's death.³

In April 1731 Malhar Rao had reached up to Mandsor and probably some Maratha contingents reached up to Sitamau borders too.⁴ The same year Ranoji Shinde was also sent along with Malhar Rao to Malwa.⁵ But Gaj Singh the new ruler of Sitamau was still in Delhi only.⁶ In 1732 when the responsibility to collect *chauth* from Malwa and *saranjam* rights were distributed among Malhar Rao Holkar, Ranoji Shinde and Pawar brothers. Aalot subdivision within Sitamau was given to Pawar brothers and the rest was assigned to Ranoji Shinde. Thus for tribute collection Sitamau was divided between Shinde and Pawar families.

Gaj Singh's presence in Aalot in 1733 and Susner in October, 1734 probably was to convey to the Pawar brothers about the tracts in their possession belonging to Sitamau.⁷ Letters written by the Sitamau chief from Susner also hints at the economic crisis due to Maratha presence in the region.⁸

¹ Barhat, Shivdattdan, op. cit., p.35

² *Sitamau-Laduna ke Shilalekh*, Sitamau, 1990, p.35

³ Mehta collection, p.49; Barhat, Shivdattdan, op. cit., p.37

⁴ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.216; Barhat, Shivdattdan, op. cit., p.41

⁵ Sinh, *Malwa in Transition*, p.216

⁶ Ibid., p.41

⁷ *Sitamau Sanads*, Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, No.23 & No.25; Barhat, Shivdattdan, op.cit., p.44

⁸ *Sitamau Sanads*, Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, No.25 & No.26; Barhat, Shivdattdan, op.cit., p.44

According to a document from the beginning years of Gaj Singh's rule after the Marathas were conferred with the *subadari* of Malwa in 1741 Sitamau ruler agreed to pay 35,000 rupees circulated in Ujjain region in tribute to the Marathas.¹ As the collection of *chauth* was not proper from Aalot subdivision in Sitamau, Pawars took it under their direct control and Gaj Singh visited Aalot and Susner to sort out this matter but due to bad economic condition of Sitamau he may not have been able to arrange the amount of *chauth* dues and so in 1733-34 Aalot pargana was lost by Gaj Singh to the Marathas.

The death of Gaj Singh on 10th July, 1752 at Ujjain led to succession of Fateh Singh, his son, on the seat of power. He was facing the onslaught of the Marathas and was also paying the tribute amount of 35,000 rupees.² Fateh Singh possessed only Sitamau and Nahargarh. In 1753 due to difficulty in the payment of tribute Jayappa Shinde's officials captured Nahargarh³ further plunging the economic situation of the Sitamau state into graver condition. In the last months of 1753 Fateh Singh decided to meet Jayappa Shinde to solve his problem.⁴ He complained about collection of more than fixed amount from his men and about the ongoing extortions and loot and encroachment over Nahargarh area by his officials. But this didn't have any impact on the Marathas, rather in January 1754 Jayappa raised the amount to be collected from Sitamau to rupees 41500 per annum by issuing a *sanad* in the name of Fateh Singh. Thus Nahargarh was separated from Sitamau for ever and now Fateh Singh had to collect and pay 41,500 rupees only from Sitamau.⁵

Period between 1754 to 1761 passed peacefully as Marathas were busy elsewhere in the North. However, due to non-payment of tribute afterwards, as Nahargarh area was lost now, Sitamau came in the list of the states having dues, called as *Bakidars*. When Mahadji Shinde took over he instructed his officials to collect dues from states including Sitamau. His officials in Mandsor started putting pressure on Fateh Singh. In 1769 Maratha official collected *kakuni* cess from the Sitamau ruler. Maratha officials Harji Baji collected 700 rupees and Gopal Rao

¹ *Dastavej Bahi Patra* No.84 and 855, Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau; Barhat, Shivdattadan, *op.cit.*, p.45

² Barhat, Shivdattadan, *op.cit.*, 51

³ *Dastavej Bahi*, No.239, Keshodas Collection, Sitamau Archive

⁴ Barhat, Shivdattadan, *op.cit.*, p.52

⁵ *Ibid.*,

Bhagwant collected 90 rupees from Sitamau city.¹ This was extra amount collected besides the annual tribute. This affected local agriculture and trade. Fateh Singh reported this matter to Mahadji Shinde but he didn't respond.²

Raja Fateh Singh ran his administration through his kamdar or official having the designation of *Diwan*. During his period Shah Malukchand, Bhati Lakshmi Das, Bhati Chimna and Kothari Ummed Singh worked as *kamdars*. State orders were issued in kamdars name. In his directly controlled areas called *khalsa* land the management was through the *havalgars*. State orders were issued in *havalgars* name for the *khalsa* territory. State officials were paid by assignment of land in their name as evident from a order issued in 1764. Fateh Singh assigned neighbouring Titrod area as *jagir* to his younger brother Jaswant Singh.³ Land in *jagir* was allotted to other important persons too which reduced states income from revenue and there was irregularity in payment to Marathas. This led to greater interference of Marathas in local affairs. Maratha officials themselves started collecting the tribute amount causing friction between the Maratha and the local officials. Fateh Singh's resistance and non-payment in the year 1781 led to his arrest by Maratha officials. He was arrested and confined at a Maratha outpost in Shajapur for the next three years.⁴

In this period of Fateh Singh's confinement Sitamau was controlled by the Marathas and was looted.⁵ For the next three years Sitamau was under Maratha control. Fateh Singh's family and officials appealed to the Maratha official Ramchandra Rao posted at Shajapur. Fateh Singh was released in 1784 on terms of agreeing to pay rupees one lakh. Fateh Singh reached his state on 29th August 1784 and as there was no money to pay one lakh rupees fine the ruler sold the jewellery of his queens. He also rewarded Ram Chandra Rao for helping him. Defeat of Mahadji Shinde's forces by Jaipur, Jodhpur and Hamadani forces in the Battle of Tunga in 1787 also encouraged local rulers of Malwa to show their opposition to Maratha presence in their territory. Fateh Singh also released a copper coin of one paisa value in his name. After Maratha setback there were resistances to presence

¹ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.3, L.455

² Barhat, Shivdattdan, *op.cit* , p.54

³ Ibid., p.55

⁴ *Dastaveji Bahi* No.1, p.84 A, *Keshavdas Collection*, Sitamau Archive

⁵ Barhat, Shivdattdan, *op.cit* , p.56

of Maratha forces even in Sitamau area. Even earlier in 1784 Fateh Singh's son Raj Singh fought with a Maratha Lakshman Rao and a local Rajput accompanying the Prince of Sitamau was killed. Hearing about minting of coin in his own name by Sitamau ruler Mahadji Shinde established his Thana in Sitamau and took over Sitamau.¹ Fateh Singh kept himself in his haveli at Laduna and was scared of Marathas as he had been arrested earlier too in 1781. Fateh Singh kept on complaining from Laduna about disturbance being created in Sitamau by Maratha officials but Shinde didn't pay any attention.² Similar picture emerges of resistance shown by Sitamau ruler to Maratha presence is described in a Marathi document dating 1790. Maratha officials admit that it was difficult to collect payment from the principality of Sitamau.³ The Maratha official Naro Hari writes on 15 th October 1790 about Shindes pending dues of 16 thousand rupees which Sitamau was asked to pay.⁴ Of which Eight thousand were paid.' Later Maratha forces arrived at Sitamau and the *kamdar* of Sitamau also came forward to negotiate the payment of the remaining dues to the Marathas. Marathas asked Sitamau official to pay dues quickly.⁵ But on this Sitamau official said who will pay for areas taken under control forcefully.⁶ On this Shinde's official warned them about collecting dues forcefully. Now under pressure from Shinde's representative Sitamau *kamdar* assured to pay four thousand immediately and rest in a months time.⁷

Mapping the Local Elites of Central India in the Early 18th Century

The prominent Rajput zamindaries in Malwa suba existing just before the Maratha inroads were those of Awasgarh or Barwani, Mandu(chief of Rathore clan), Amjhera, Jhabua(Rathore) in south-western Malwa, which were going to face the Maratha before the others.⁸ Ratlam (Rathore), Sitamau(Rathore),

¹ Barhat, Shivdattdan, *op.cit* , p.58

² Ibid.

³ *Historical Papers of Sindhias of Gwalior*, D B Diskalkar(ed.), Satara Historical Research Society, Satara,1934, No.253

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ This description of some of the Rajput chief and extent of their territory is based on John Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India*, Vol.1, pp.463-515 and Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, pp.75-82

Badnawar(Sesodia), Sailana (Rathore), principalities were positioned just north of it in Central Malwa. On the borders of Gujarat and Malwa suba were located areas of the chiefs of Banswada (Sesodia), Dungarpur (Sesodia) and Deolia with capital at Pratabgarh. Areas around Ujjain were directly under the control of Mughals. In the north-west part of the suba were the states of Rampura (Chandrawat clan of Sesodia Rajputs), Kotah (Hada), and Bundi (Hada). South-east of Kotah was the area of Umat Rajputs known as Umatwada, here two Umat Rajput chiefs were having their stronghold at Rajgarh and Narsinghgarh. Further east of Umatwada, was the famous Khichiwada and Ahirwada territory (In the Maratha period they strongly resisted Shindes) where Khichi Rajput Chiefs were having their stronghold at Raghu(o)garh and Sironj was their capital. The Khichi state in the east were the last Rajput chiefs of above type, beyond which lay the areas occupied by Chhatrasal Bundela in the north-east Malwa and Bhopal state of Dost Mohammad Khan in the south-east at the turn of the century.

While Western and Central Malwa were dominated by Rajput chiefs whose ancestors or present occupants had come from Rajasthan or North India, bordering areas of north-eastern Malwa starting from Chanderi, touching Sironj and Bhilsa in north-south direction were under the influence of Purbia Rajput chiefs in the pre-Mughal period and in the Mughal period, the Bundela chiefs from neighbouring Bundelkhand area.¹ Unlike their counterparts in Malwa, Bundela Rajputs were of obscure origin. They had colonized the area around “Jhansi (UP) and Tikamgarh(MP) districts of today as early as the 13th century”.² Due to their low origin, though they claimed “Chauhan status, other major Rajput clans refused matrimonial alliances with them and were relegated to a position of relative isolation”.³ Later we would find one of the Bundela chiefs seeking help from the Marathas in the early 18th century against the Mughals and also against Muhammad Khan Bangash, rather than any local Rajput chieftain, may be due to the same reason.⁴ At the close of the 17th Century, Chhatrasal Bundela was

¹ Kolf, Dirk H. A., *op.cit.*, pp. 87,126; Gupta, B D, *Life and Times of Maharaja Chhatrasal Bundela*, New Delhi, 1980, p.124

² *Ibid.*, p.121

³ *Ibid.*,

⁴ Raghubir Singh, *Malwa in Transition*, p.46, “In 1703, Chhatrasal invited Nima Sindhia to Malwa”; B D Gupta, *op.cit.*, Again he invited Baji Rao in 1728-1729 ; H. N. Sinha, *Rise of The Peshwas*, Allahabad, 1954, p.142

annexing areas of north-eastern Malwa comprising Sironj-Bhilsa area, and failure to subdue him by arranging Mughal campaigns led to peaceful negotiations in 1705-1706, allowing him to remain in his conquered territory as Mughal mansabdar of 4,000 rank.¹ Another Bundela Chief, Bharat Shah, descendant of Rudra Pratap of Orchha state, founded in the Mughal period (1531), had conquered Chanderi in the period of Jahangir.² Chanderi state founded later remained loyal to Mughals, later till the early 18th century up to the period of Mohammad Shah.³

Further south and west to above discussed Bundela territory, around this time an Afghan chief Dost Mohammad Khan founded the future state of Bhopal. He came from Afghanistan in 1703 and joined the Mughal army as a soldier which he left soon to become the leader of a mercenary band of fellow Afghans and served the state of Sitamau for some time.⁴ His enterprising nature won him fortunes in south –eastern Malwa in 1707-1720 period when at the behest of Mughal ruler as well as on his own he conquered the rebellious Rajput chiefs of the area, as Stewart Gordon remarks, “In the decade 1707-1720, Dost Mohammad Khan continued subjugation of the Rajput zamindars of eastern Malwa” and by 1720.... From his base at the village of Bhopal he held several forts, the pargana of Sujalpur, several other places in Hoshangabad and Saugor districts, and more tenuously Bhilsa, Ashta, Sehore and Duraha (all within the radius of 30 miles from Bhopal). By 1723, the Afghan adventurer, with his newly recruited army of 10,000 men, was far stronger than the forces available to the Mughal provincial administration”.⁵

South-west of Bhopal in the pargana Kampel of sarkar Ujjain, a Brahmin named Nandlal Mandloi was the zamindar of the pargana at the time of Maratha raids in early 18th century. His grand father Balram Chaudhury and father Chudaman had earlier been building their influence in the area. Persian letters from Mandloi Daftar Published in Hindi by Raghubir Sinh shows that Balram

¹ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, pp.46-47

² Kolff, Dirk H. A., op.cit., pp.121, 126

³ Ibid., p.136

⁴ Gordon, Stewart N, ‘Legitimacy and Loyalty in Some Successor States of the Eighteenth Century’, in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* edited by J.F Richards, p.287; See also Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India*, Vol.1, pp.340-353

⁵ Gordon, Stewart ‘Legitimacy and Loyalty in Some Successor States of the Eighteenth Century’, p.287

Chaudhury was murdered on 26th March 1662 and at that time he was the Chaudhuri of the Pargana Kampel.¹ After his death Chudaman was given the sanad for the post of “Chaudhuri of Pargana Kampel in Sarkar Ujjain of Suba Malwa in 1668-1669 for the period of October 1664 to October 1672” which was made effective retrospectively. In the sanad, Chudaman was acknowledged as loyal to the Mughals and one who would work for the welfare of the rayat i.e., cultivators of the soil, by the subadar Wazir Khan Muhammad.² Nandlal became Mandloi - a local designation for chaudhuri in the area - after the death of his father Chudaman, on 1st April, 1700 he was officially given the sanad for this post in keeping with the loyalty shown and good work that he would perform, issued by an official of the then Subadar Ajam Khan.³ Nandlal was in contact with the subadar Azam Khan, who directed him in his work of revenue collection, supervision of cultivation i.e., keeping an account of area being cropped and harvesting of crop and settling of new areas by peasants, also about change of Mughal officials, revenue collectors and faujdar of the area.⁴ On 27th December 1710 Nandlal was awarded a part of the amount (Rs 300/- and Rs.1000/- periodically) for his personal expenditure.⁵ Thus, Nandlal was in Mughal service at the beginning of the 18th Century and Mughals were dependent on him for revenue collection and other aspect of pargana administration which he was managing very well till 19th March 1716, as evident from the Persian letters from Mandloi Daftar.⁶

It was Nandlal Mandloi whose support proved vital for Maratha entry in Malwa as he guarded the fords on the Narmada River.

How Holkar family moved into Central India and made areas near Indore its secured base is mentioned in Holkar family's household records. Malhar Rao Holkar initially allied with Nandlal Chaudhuri to gain a foot hold in areas nearby Indore.

Before probing deeper into Malhar Rao's relations with Nandlal Chaudhuri of pargana Kampel it would be important to mention the possible ways the local

¹ 'Nandlal Mandloi aur Mandloi Daftar' Sinh, Raghubir, in *Ahilya Asmarika*, Vol.6, 1976, Raghubir Library, Sitamau p.10, letter 1

² Ibid., pp.10-11, letter 2

³ Ibid., p.11, letter 3&4

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., pp.11-12, letter 6

⁶ Ibid., p.13, letter 12

elite facilitated Maratha forces and what was their own interest. We have already seen in the first chapter that they were vital for getting access and control over strategic geographical and man-made strongholds. They also provided military intelligence about the areas to be captured, like approach to the enemy's stronghold, their armed strength as well as supplied provisions at vital locations to the fighting Maratha forces. They were also good retreat bases when seriously challenged. The local elites also played the role of mediators and power brokers between Maratha sardars and other recalcitrant local elite of the area. In the worse situations they also joined the rank of Maratha forces with their own army against the hostile chieftains or a common enemy like Mughal officials. In return, the local chieftain enjoyed protection from future Maratha raids and other locally powerful group, a certain degree of freedom in payment of tribute also.

Study of Holkar's early correspondences shows how Malhar Rao got in touch with local influential elements before taking greater control over the tracks of Maheshwar and Indore. There was a slow and steady inroad in local affairs by Holkar, visible in the Marathi letters of the period. Nandlal Chaudhari is thus found supplying a tent asked for by Malhar Rao Holkar in 1720 while on campaign in the neighboring area. Malhar Rao also asks him to advice about Rana of Barwani with whom his own relations were lately strained. Barwani Chief had earlier employed Malhar Rao Holkar and was a neighbor of Nandalal. In 1729 Peshwa Baji Rao wrote to Nandal about his forthcoming visit to that area for settlement of Ujjain without any trouble. Nandlal was asked to play a diplomatic part in this settlement. In 1730 again Malhar Rao while on campaign at Depalpur near Indore asked him to dispatch 80 small shooting missiles, one and quarter Khandee of ammunition and half a maund of lead. Back in 1724 when Raghuji Bhonsle tried to invade pargana Kampel, Peshwa Baji Rao warned him against doing so as it had been assigned to his brother Chimanaji Ballal as Mokasa for maintenance of Peshwa's paga i.e., personal soldiers. Nandlal in 1731 is found having dues to Malhar Rao and he is asked to pay in February 1731 and then again in a letter of 12 May 1731 in very harsh terms. Nandal dies same year in October, his successor Tejkarna is taken into service and asked to co-operate with Malhar Rao and Ranoji Shinde. Much later in 1736 Tejkarna is asked by Malhar Rao to encourage agriculture work in paragna Indore and also to supply him furniture and material for tents.

As earlier described, Bundela Rajputs dominated the areas of Bundelkhand which was a part of Allahabad suba in the Mughal period. Bundela Rajputs, as earlier described, were of local origin unlike Rajputs of Malwa who had migrated from Rajasthan. Their low status amongst the Rajputs was enhanced seemingly by “Akbar, who publically recognized the obscure Rajput chiefs claim to Kshatriyahood as well as their incorporation as Mughal mansabdar”,¹ But the Bundela Rajput never completely submitted to the Mughals. Often they left Mughal service and asserted their independent status. This was possible mainly due to the geographical factor, Bundelkhand was hilly and covered by forest land in abundance, here it was difficult to completely subjugate the Bundela chiefs from their strongholds which were generally well fortified hilltops like “Kalinjur fort, Ajaygarh fort and other forts in the area.”² Orchha state, first among the Bundela states, founded by Madhukar Sah at the beginning of Mughal period later got divided as succession dispute among the brothers of Madhukar Sah and even later continued, giving birth to two separate states of Chanderi and Datiya ruled by other branches of the Bundela chief. Mughal ruler tried to control all three Bundela states by backing them in their succession disputes as well as honouring them from time to time.³ As Kolff has argued, the strength of the Bundela Rajput in the area was due to their “ability to recruit, organize and lead small armies” which was put “at the disposal of the Mughal ruler without having to relinquish personal command over them”.⁴ Datiya chief, Rao Dalpat Rao was a Mughal ally at the close of the century where as Orchha ruler Jujhar and Vikramjit were killed in 1635 by Gonds leading to decline of this state.⁵ In 1642 Champat Rai an associate of the Orchha ruler Bir Singh Deo, with the help of Mughal ruler Shahjahan was able to restore Orchha state to Pahar Singh the younger brother of Jujhar Singh but at the same time his son Chhatrasal found his own state at Panna which at the close of 17th century became so vast that it extended even in the bordering areas of

¹ Kolff, Dirk H.A., op.cit., p.122.

² Pogson, W.R., *A History of The Boondelas*, Delhi, 1974, see the sketch of the Ajaygarh (Ujjegurh) and Kalinjur forts in Pogson’s work on pp.135, 138 to 139 respectively; Saran, P., *The Provincial Government of the Mughals, 1526-1658*, Allahabad, 1941, pp.12-13, 120-124; Gupta, B D, op.cit., p.123 Bundelkhand was known as Dangaiya Rajya means land covered with forest

³ Kolff, Dirk H.A., op.cit., pp.125-127

⁴ Ibid., p.127

⁵ Ibid., pp.141-143

north-east Malwa and almost whole of south and eastern Bundelkhand. Chhatrasal Bundela's growing power and his recurrent defiance to the Mughal rule led to many campaign by the Mughals but they failed to control his expanding boundaries at the turn of the century and was accommodated as ruler of his newly acquired territory with the formal grant of a service tenure in the rank of 4000 in 1705-1706, during this period Orchha, Chanderi and Datia states continued to support the Mughal and were known as *badshahi* in contrast to Chhatrasal's state, known as *dangahi*.¹ Chhatrasal's possession in 1728-1729 when he was to retire, expanded into the following areas, "Kalpee, Huttah, Saugor, Jansee (Jhansi), Suronj (Sironj), Konnah, Gurh Kotaah and Hurdee Nugur".² Eastern Malwa and Western Bundelkhand was given to Peshwa for helping him against Muhammad Khan Bangash, the "Punnah Raj comprising Kalinjur, Muhun, Dhamonee to his son Hirdee Sah and Principality of Jaitpur (Jytpoor) to the other son Prithvi Singh".³ Bundelas taking advantage of their geographical location always remained troublesome and unlike other Rajputs, Mughal rule could not change the "Hindu character of Bundela Kingship".⁴

Khandesh which was first to come under Maratha sway was actually a transition zone between strictly Maratha dominated areas of Maharashtra and Rajput dominated areas of Malwa. Khandesh suba, separating Malwa suba from Maharashtra, as earlier described, was inhabited by land holders mostly of Kunbi caste in settled areas. It had a mixed identity as it neither resembled Maratha nor Rajput dominates areas. The other elements in the local population in that period were Muslims; Bhils, Gonds and Kolis in the marginal areas. The local elite in the region were the *deshmukhs* i.e., head of the parganas, mostly of Kunbi caste in the settled areas of Adilabad, Raver, Jamner, Yaval, Amalner and Varangaon in the Tapti river valley.⁵ *Deshmukh* was responsible for ensuring collection of revenue in the pargana and often shared the burden of keeping local records of tax

¹ Ibid., p.143; Gupta, B.D., *op.cit.*, p.123

² Pogson, W.R., *op.cit.*, p.105

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kolff, Dirk H.A., *op.cit.*, p.136

⁵ Gordon, Stewart N, 'Kinship and Pargana in Eighteenth Century Khandesh', pp. 383, 391, see also Gordon, Stewart N, 'Recovery from Adversity in Eighteenth Century India: Re-thinking Villages, Peasants and Politics in Pre-Modern kingdoms', pp. 104-105

collections and submissions.¹ Chiefs of Bhil, Gond and Kolis tribe were occupying the hilly tracts in the extreme east and west as well as northern tracts bordering Malwa suba, comprising hilly tracts of Vindhya range up to the banks of Narmada river, forming the frontier areas of the suba.² Bhils periodically raided areas of neighbouring Bijagarh and Nandurbar and other areas forming plane and river valleys.³ Stewart Gordon in his work relating to organisation of parganas in Khandesh suba giving his remark says, "Khandesh, parganas had little history of their own. They were on the receiving end of major political and military events.... which meant destroyed and vacant villages and depopulation, with no evidence of a strong clan/lineage structure at the pargana level".⁴

Unlike Malwa and Bundelkhand, in Khandesh the local elites were not Rajputs who had ancient tradition of political domination of their area, rather were of cultivating class settled in extremely fertile tracts. They were at the turn of the century already paying tribute to independent Maratha bands operating in the west Khandesh area led by Kanthaji Kadam Bande, Nimaji Shinde and later Khanderao Dabhade and Peshwa himself.⁵

Above discussion on local elites of Central India describing their sphere/area of influence, position in the local society, relationship with the Mughal ruler at the time of first Maratha raids in the region, draws a picture showing them under the control of Mughal ruler through the *jagir* system. As weak Mughal rulers and crisis in the Mughal system holding them together started undermining the central authority Rajput zamindars asserted their independent position. Marathas exploited this situation and entered Malwa as power brokers promising total freedom to local Rajput zamindars from Mughal control.

¹ Gordon, Stewart N, 'Kinship and Pargana in Eighteenth Century Khandesh', p.382

² Gordon, Stewart N, 'Recovery from Adversity in Eighteenth Century India: Re-thinking Villages, Peasants and Politics in Pre-Modern kingdoms' pp.105, 111, Malcolm, John, *A Memoir of Central India*, vol.1, p.515

³ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa In Transition*, p.79, Gordon, Stewart N., 'Recovery from Adversity in Eighteenth Century India: Re-thinking Villages, Peasants and Politics in Pre-Modern kingdoms', p.105

⁴ Gordon, Stewart N. , 'Kinship and Pargana in Eighteenth Century Khandesh', p.391

⁵ Mohan Singh, *Waqā -i-Holkar*, translated from Persian by Jadunath Sarkar, Shri Raghubir Library, Sitamau, foot-note on p.6; Gordon, Stewart N. 'Kinship and Pargana in Eighteenth Century Khandesh', pp.383-384

Role of Some Local Elites during Maratha Expansion

Serious Maratha raids into the Malwa plateau did not begin until the mid 1720s. New Maratha leadership of Shahu & Peshwa brought great vigour among the Maratha bands campaigning in Malwa. Peshwa's policy of giving chance to new recruits rather than vintage Maratha sardars especially made Maratha campaigns in Malwa successful. Shinde and Holkar were part of Peshwa's army campaigning in Malwa from the mid 1720s onwards.

How initially Maratha sardars hired themselves in the internal quarrels of the Rajput zamindars of Amjhera, Jhabua and Sailana which showed Mughal subadar losing his hold over them and the crucial success of Maratha forces against Malwa subabdar

Two classical studies by Raghubir Singh and Stewart Gordon on Malwa during the first half of 18th century have dealt with the Rajput zamindars' position and reactions to changing political scene as Maratha campaigns were being launched. Local Rajputs of Malwa and Bundelkhand were subjected to very keen contest that the region witnessed due to its central location and economic potentials. The long contest for Malwa during the period 1720-1740 between the Maratha forces led by Peshwa Baji Rao, and Mughal Emperor's representatives, which included self ambitious Mughal nobles Nizam-ul- Mulk and Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur was quite complicated. Malwa's central location made Nizamul-ul-Mulk and Sawai Jai Singh to enter this contest for their own self interest of later making this region a part of their own possession.

Successive Maratha campaigns in southern Malwa to collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from Rajput rulers brought Maratha sardars closer to the internal quarrels among local Rajputs due to their superior military strengths.¹ Initially Maratha sardars hired themselves in the internal quarrels of the Rajput zamindars of Amjhera, Jhabua and Sailana which showed Mughal subadar losing his hold over them as Rajputs started relying on Marathas.² The crucial victory of Maratha forces against Malwa subabdar Girdhar Bahadur and his brother Daya Bahadur in 1728 made future Maratha inroads in Malwa much more forceful and vigorous.

¹ Singh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, pp.184 -185; Gordon, S N, 'The Slow Conquest', p.8

² Gordon, S N, 'The Slow Conquest' p.8

However, the tribute collecting missions in different *parganas* of Malwa continued till the final victory against Mughal forces at Bhopal in 1738.

Besides Marathas getting involved with the local Rajputs during the initial phases of the Maratha expansion in Central India, the biggest support to Maratha forces came from the Jaipur ruler Swai Jai Singh, his three tenures as governor of Malwa in Feb.1713-Nov.1717, Nov.1729 to Sept 19 1730 and Sept.28, 1732 to Aug 3 1737 worked in favour of the Marathas. "Jai Singh was friendly with the Marathas, kept them informed of even the most confidential consultations and talks in the inner circles of the Emperor, ministers and other influential men at the capital."¹ Jai Singh's pro Maratha policy had dual purpose; first he wanted to drive away the Mughals from Malwa with Maratha help and then wanted to extend his own state power up to Malwa.² Last tenure of Jai Singh as Governor of Malwa in the 1730s was particularly beneficial to the Marathas. Successive defeats to Mughal forces led Jai Singh to advise Mughals noble Khan Dauran to make peace with Shinde and Holkar as Maratha occupation of Malwa was now inevitable despite Mughal efforts to stop them. He also started the negotiations with Peshwas agent after Maratha victory over Mughal forces in 1735 which led to finally the Mughal Emperor agreeing to *chauth* contribution from 28 parganas of Malwa to the Marathas. Mughal nobles blamed Jai Singh saying, "Jai Singh has ruined the Empire by his secret support to the Marathas."³

However, death of Sawai Jai Singh and rivalry among the sons of Jai Singh from 1743-1750 changed the whole perception about Marathas in the eyes of the new incumbent Madho Singh. From the beginning of 1750s regular Maratha demand for tribute and at least one fourth of Jaipur's territory of Rampura, Tonk, Toda, Malpura and the fort of Ranthambore kept Jaipur rulers cautious and mostly antagonized. However local politics couldn't keep them apart for ever. Contemporary Marathi sources from Peswha Daftar reveals Jaipur ruler Madho Singh's offer of mediation between Jodhpur ruler Bijay Singh and Shinde leaders in 1756 when they were besieging Nagore.⁴ Nevertheless both needed each other in

¹ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.129

² Ibid.,

³ Ibid., p.234

⁴ *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar*, (New Series), Bombay, 1957, Vol.I, No.186

the 1760s to thwart the Jat threats.¹ Only to fight this common enemy which at that time was both militarily very powerful and possessed maximum treasure that Marathas were united with Jaipur state. Rajashtani *Kharita* records and English records of the Foreign Department shows co-ordination of Marathas with Jaipur rulers in fighting Jat forces on the northern borders of Malwa.² Maratha sought military support from Jaipur ruler during this period to curb Jat power.³ By this time Jaipur's military position and finances had come under pressure due to Maratha presence in the region.⁴

There was regular opposition to Maratha occupation of Jaipur territory on its southwest and southeast border by Holkar and Shinde. As issue of tribute payment worsened the relations with both Shinde and Holkar, Jaipur state couldn't escape the Maratha ravages, ties of earlier friendship were completely broken, and situations kept on worsening till they met in the battle field of Lalsot in 1787 about which more details are discussed in the chapter on Maratha power in Rajasthan.

Maratha expansion and consolidation in Central India and further up in the North was in stages and over a long time span the complexion of local elites further up in North Malwa much closer to the Maratha line of control during the period of Shinde and Holkar's stay in Central India reveals a much different picture.

In the first stage of Maratha expansion as above mentioned Marathas faced the smaller Rajput rulers in their localities in south Malwa and gained easy victories or acceptance of their supremacy. This phase lasted till 1740 and ended with the battle of Bhopal. Grant of Malwa *suba* by the Mughal emperor opened the doors for further acquisitions in the North in Rajasthan neighbouring Jat and *Doab* territories.

The period from 1732 to 1761 was one of Maratha expansion in Northern India and Rajputana. Kota became the gateway to Rajputana during this period.

¹ Singh, Dilbagh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants: Rajasthan in the 18th Century*, Delhi, 1990, p.9

² *IndoreKharita No.89*, Chaitra Badi 10, 1822/1765; *IndoreKharita No.92*, Kartik, Sudi 10, 1822/1765; *Foreign Department Records*, NAI, SC 68(14, 127-128, 15, 212-14) See, p.128 ...a severe war is now carrying on between the Jats assisted by the Sikhs on one side and Madhousing with the Marattas on the other. When these power are disengaged there's no knowing...

³ *Indore Kharita No.89*, Chaitra Badi 10, 1822/1765

⁴ Singh, Dilbagh, *op.cit.*, p.9

Through the Mukundra Pass the Maratha hordes used to pour into the states of Kota, Bundi and Jaipur. Besides, Kota was a small state, unable to resist the aggressions and depredations of the Deccani raiders.¹

While Chattarsal Bundela another locally powerful Rajput ruler provided safe bases in the eastern Malwa and Bundelkhand in 1728-29, in the west Kota ruler Durjansal Hada who sided with Mughal forces in the beginning was finally subdued in 1738, agreeing to pay a tribute of rupees 10 lakhs. This happened just after the Maratha victory in the battle of Bhòpal against the Mughal forces led by Nizam. Thus settlement of Kota ruler was another big step as it became a permanent base for Shinde and Marathas as a whole. Kota ruler's *diwan* Zalim Singh Jhala in the later period was a crucial Maratha ally aiding Maratha forces; in return he was allowed to rule Kota without much interference from Maratha forces. Gulgule records of the later period shows fine chord struck by Mahadji Shinde with Jhala Zalim Singh in the management of areas in Marwar and Hadauti region. Mahadji in his correspondences with his local representative Balaji Yeshwant Gulgule sought co-ordination from Zalim Singh when Maratha *kamavisdars* were trying to settle the above areas.² Maratha relations with Kota matured over the years and remained steady. An agriculturally productive area located on the boundary of Shindes possessions in neighbouring Gwalior area it really proved a great source of strength in their handling of the regional Rajput politics in the states of Mewar, Jaipur and Bundi from Kota which acted as a Maratha base.

Gulgule, Maratha *vakil* at Kota became closely associated with Zalim Singh during his early career; Zalim however left Kota in 1765 and stayed away from Kota politics. But as Kota ruler found it difficult to run his state in 1770 Gulgule suggested his name for the position of Faujdar in place of Akhai Ram Pancholi when asked by Kota ruler Guman Singh.³ Lalaji Balal was also asked to approach Zalim Singh for his return to Kota. Lalaji met Zalim Singh at his jagir Kirpapur and Chitakhera in Mewar where he was passing his time and asked by Lalaji to

¹ Shastri, R P, *Jhala Zalim Singh (1730-1830)*, Jaipur, 1971, p.27

² See *Gulgule Daftar* (typescript), Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, Vol. 5(1781-1785) & Vol.6(1785-94)

³ Shastri, R P, *op.cit.*, pp.58-59

come back which he did in 1770. Zalim was reinstated on the post of Faujdar of Kota with full powers.¹

It is said that immediately on his reinstatement; Zalim Singh addressed letters to the various Maratha sardars, apprising them of his reappointment as foudar. On his return Maratha threats on the Kota borders subsided too as he approached them for settlement. It was a crucial time when both Mahadji and Zalim's were trying to stabilize their position in their respective states. Zalim's second stint as Kota faujdar was a glorious one. As Guman Singh expired in 1771, he immediately became *defacto* ruler of Kota, which position he did not relinquish for the next two generations of rulers. He was now personally known to, Shinde and several sardars in their camps and also to rulers of Bundi and Jaipur, and enjoyed the status of a *jagirdar* of Mewar, whereas at Kota he was regent and guardian of the young ruler. During the next 50 years he played a very important part directly in Kota State and indirectly in the neighbouring states of Rajputana.² Shinde made full use of his acquaintances in Rajasthan in handling the local elites of Rajasthan. Zalim too needed Shinde to settle score with his rival the Salumbar chief of Chundawat faction in Mewar. Kota also needed Maratha support against Jaipur and Bundi. Jaipur's expansionist designs had forced Kota ruler to call for Holkar's support in 1761. With Bundi too Kota's relations were not friendly through out the period. Shinde as an ally in the neighbourhood provided security to this relatively smaller Rajput state on Malwa Rajasthan boundary.

After Marathas blow hot blow cold relations with the Kota ruler since their arrival in the 1730s, now in Jhala Zalim Singh, Shinde met a man who was much more diplomatic and cooperative. Zalim Singh won Maratha support to counter threats from the Jaipur State and this also worked in favour of the Marathas who were facing resistance from the Jaipur Rajputs.

Jhala Zalim Singh's first encounter with Mahadji Shinde is supposed to have been at battle of Shipra in 1769 but doubts have been cast over this event, where Zalim Singh fought for the Udaipur ruler against Mahadji Shinde. He was imprisoned and later released due to intervention of Ambaji Ingle, Shinde's general

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p.61

who paid the ransom for his release.¹ Zalim later came to the aid of Mahadji during the latter's acid test against the English forces in Malwa during the Anglo – Maratha war in 1782. That Zalim was a close ally of Mahadji Shinde is proved from his association with Shinde during the later years especially during the Lalsot campaign and victories over Rajput forces in 1790.

South-west of Kota lay the Rampura state of the Chandrawats that proved like a thorn in Holkar's Malwa possessions in the north-west. Rampura ruled by Chandrawats of Sisodia clan was given to Madho Singh by Udaipur ruler in 1729. Holkars were promised the same territory by Madho Singh for their participation in the Jaipur succession dispute against Ishwari Singh. But the local Chandrawat Rajput chief was quite opposed to any outside power's interference in their affairs right from the Mughal period.² Rampura which was under Holkar's control rose into rebellion after Marathas' defeat in the Battle of Panipat. Local Maratha officer Krishnaji Tandev³ defeated Chandrawats before Holkar's arrival to suppress the rebellion.⁴ Later in the same year Holkars settled Rampura as they assessed revenue of three and half lakhs from 488 villages out of 519 villages in *Pargana* Rampura in July 1761. Holkars then granted the local chief Laxman Singh Chandrawat only 31 villages.⁵

Two months later Malhar Rao Holkar also assigned jagir worth ten thousand to Laxmansingh Chandrawat in Rampura *pargana* which again showed that Holkars were dealing very authoritatively with Chandrawats.⁶ The Holkar *kamavisdar* was ordered to make the necessary arrangement in a collective way throughout Rampura *pargana* showing full Maratha control over the area.⁷ For the next seven years Holkar seem to have controlled Rampura with full authority as both Marathi and Rajasthani records are silent about any happening in Rampura. It seems Chandrawats were lying low for the period Malhar Rao dominated the proceedings in Malwa and Rajasthan after the Battle of Panipat. Soon after the death of Malhar Rao trouble started as Chandrawats asserted their rights over the

¹ Ibid., pp.57-58

² Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, pp.118-119,182

³ Ibid., p.311

⁴ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, V V Thakur (ed), Indore, 1944, Vol.1, No.157/21-4-1761

⁵ Ibid., No.158/13-7-1761

⁶ Ibid., No.162/13-9-1761

⁷ Ibid.,

locality. In 1767 Holkars reaffirmed Chandrawats in possession of 31 villages in four *talukas* of Aamad (7villages/Rs13, 400), Datoli (9Villages/Rs12,000), Garoth (4 villages/Rs10,000) and Pathar (10 villages/Rs15,000) worth 50400 rupees in revenue. This particular grant had the rider, “the chiefs of Kota, Bundi and Banswada must guarantee the good conduct of Chandrawat.” The latter was to build no forts in the villages.¹

However, Chandrawats resisted Holkar’s rule over the territory which lay on the Malwa borders once the military pressure from Holkar was gone after the death of Malhar Rao Holkar. Resistance from Chandrawats forced Tukoji Holkar to approach Jaipur ruler in 1767, as local Maratha officials were not being allowed to settle and control the pargana.² A complaint was again lodged with the Jaipur ruler in 1770 as local Rajput Bhaums refused settlement and payment of tribute to Holkar’s *kamavisdar* for Rampura Pandit Rangoji.³ Opposition against Maratha control continued even in 1771 as both Madho Singh and Malhar Rao Holkar passed away providing a degree of freedom to the Chandrawats in the local affairs.⁴ Holkar’s agent Ragho Ranchod reported campaign against Rampura chief in February 1771with artillery and 1000 to1200 infantry and 200 to 300 cavalry.⁵ For four days Holkar forces laid a siege against the Rampura chief to capture the area.⁶ Later Udaipur Rana Ratan Singh’s agent Kesari Singh brought about reconciliation between Holkar and Rampura chief. Finally Chandrawats agreed to pay not so much in cash but in kind disposing off their horses, camels, elephants, jewellery, etc.⁷

Disturbances from Chandrawats were reported even later in 1779.⁸ and 1780⁹ Again in 1782 Abajee Vishnu, *kamavisdar* from Rampura writes to Ahilyabai about the disturbed condition of *Mahal* Rampura. He sought her

¹ Ibid., No.12/8-9-1767

² *Holkar Kharita*, No.103, Jeth Badi 5, 1824/1767

³ *Holkar Kharita*, No. 130, Margashir Badi 1, 1827/1770

⁴ *Holkar Kharita*, No. 137, Chaitra Sudi 7, 1828/1771

⁵ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, No.38/22-2-1771

⁶ Ibid.,

⁷ Ibid., No38/22-2-1771

⁸ *Holkar Kharita* No.183, Kartik Sudi 10, 1836/1779

⁹ *Holkar Kharita* No.186, Asoj Sudi 3, 1837/1780

directions for the ways and means to restore peace, and collect revenue from the Chandrawats.¹

Chandrawats even asked for *peshkash* from Maratha officials when they tried to take over the pargana.² As Holkar's control over Rampura was opposed through out the period, Mahadji Shinde had to intervene on behalf of Holkar in 1784 asking the Chandrawats to handover the control over the pargana to Holkar's officials.³ Even in 1795 Holkar's agent Lakshman Rao Anant and Rao Jagannath Ram Bahadur warned against the march of Jaipur forces in the *taluka* of Lakshmangarh to help the local chief (*Rao Raja*) as Holkar had control over the chieftain and warned of retaliation in case Jaipur forces moved in the area showing continued resistance from Chandrawats against the Holkars through out the period.⁴

Gohad Jats in the North Malwa were another locally powerful group who were not willing to give in to Maratha supremacy. Located in relatively difficult tract full of ravines in the Bhind –Gawalior region their mud fort at Gohad was a stronghold that was difficult to conquer. Gohad Jats hired the services of European mercenary Rene Madec in 1782. Madec's contingent after their defeat in the ravines of Biana in 1776 against the Rohillas retired to Agra.⁵ Here Madec made more guns, and raised another party, which he afterwards sold to the Rana of Gohad and retired to France in 1782⁶

Rana of Gohad also showed great diplomacy as he made alliances with regional powers according to the need of the time. With limited local ambitions Gohad chief was always on the move by forging ties with the most powerful group in the region. After colluding with the English against Shinde as English began their campaign from the East it didn't take long for the Gohad Jats to seek alliance with Shinde when he saw the English forces go down to the Marathas in north Malwa in 1781.⁷

¹ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, No.141/17-9-1782

² *Gawalior Kharita* No.116, Chaitra Sudi 3, 1841/1784

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.294, Jeth Sudi 5, 1852/1795

⁵ L F Smith, *A Sketch of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the Regular Corps Formed and Commanded by Europeans*, 1803-03, typescript, Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, p.6

⁶ *Ibid.*,

⁷ Joshi, R M(ed.), *Poona Akhbars*, Vol.1, Hyderabad , 1953, AR No.116/ 1781

Moreover Gohad Jat had close associations with the Bharatpur Jats in their neighbourhood. After Maratha defeat at Panipat Gohad Jats along with the Jats of Bharatpur entered Maratha controlled areas in Malwa and Bundelkhand. Raghunath Rao and Malhar Rao Holkar challenged Rana but couldn't subdue him. Later it was Mahadji Shinde who brokered a deal between Rana Chhatar Singh of Gohad and Raghunath Rao. During the Anglo - Maratha war too Rana of Gohad colluded with the English forces against Mahadji Shinde. Later after the Anglo-Maratha war in 1784 Rana of Gohad was finally brought down by Shinde's forces completing Maratha supremacy over whole of Malwa.

Khichi Rajputs of Raghogarh likewise proved a group who were opposed to both Shinde and Holkar in their own locality called Khichiwada located in the south-west of Gwalior region on the famous trade route joining Agra to southern parts of the country beyond Malwa. In the period of Maratha rule over Malwa Khichi's territory lay not far away from the Agra-Gawalior segment of the highway running towards Indore and Ujjain. It was a shorter route vital for Shinde and Holkar's movements from their bases in the North to their headquarters in Malwa. Trouble brewed between Maratha sardars and Khichi for long before they were sorted out in the 1780s by Shindes siege of their stronghold at Raghogarh.

Bharatpur Jats in the North were another local group that confronted Marathas both before and after Panipat. Located on the northern boundaries of Malwa and bordering Jaipur territory in the north-west, Jats were based in very fertile territory falling in the Bharatpur- Agra region west of Yamuna banks. Badan Singh Jat had undertaken the construction of Jat forces and Strongholds in the early part of the 18th century. Their mud forts at Bharatpur, Dig and Kumbher built and garrisoned by Badan Singh were just impregnable against the enemy's guns.¹ In 1754 the stronghold of Kumbher remained untaken even after four months of siege by 80,000 strong Maratha force led by Malhar Rao Holkar.²

In Badan Singh's time Jat wealth also increased and by Surajmal's time Jats treasury was overflowing, annual revenue during Surajmal's last years reached 175 lakhs rupees per annum. Their military power could rival any mighty force in the region as Surajmal left behind a force consisting of "15,000 cavalry and 25,000

¹ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, New Delhi, 1973, Vol.2, p.431, ...the walls of Kumbher was lined with guns with no interval between them...

² Ibid., p.437, Also see the footnote on this page

infantry, plus forces manning the forts, 300 pieces of cannon, 5000 spare horses, 60 elephants and munitions.”¹ Surajmal’s successor Jawahir Singh also acquired the services of European drilled forces, a contingent commanded by Walter Renard known as Sombre or Samru joined in June 1765 and another led by Rene Madec joined in June 1767² Moreover, their treasury was overflowing since the time of Surajmal and no one was richer than Jats in those days in the North. Jats relation with Marathas was factored and complex, Holkars were dead against the Jats after they fought against them at Kumbher in 1754 and lost their heir Khanderao Holkar. In the 1760s Holkars combined with the Jaipur Rajputs against the Jats and provided support to Nahar Singh, another son of Surajmal based at Dhaulpur when Jawahar Singh marched on Dhaulpur. But Strangely on Jats invitation Marathas led by Holkar joined Jawahir Singh in 1764-1765 against Najib and “All the country up to the bank of the Ganges was brought into the possession of the Jats and Marathas.”³ Malhar this time was seeking enormous Jat wealth. But later in 1767-69 Jats led by Jawahar Singh ran all over northern Malwa and Bundelkhand and seriously challenged Maratha occupation of Northern Malwa and Bundelkhand by combining with the Gohad Jats.⁴

Shindes relations with the Jats were much more cordial and they were allies against their common enemies the Najibs or Rohillas across the Yamuna banks in the Doab region in the North. After the failure of Lalsot Campaign Jats and Shinde forces needed each other to resurrect their lost positions. In fact Mahadji’s camp at Mathura in the later days was very close to the Jat strongholds of Bharatpur, Kumbher and Dig. Due to Jawahir Singh’s death and domestic problems that followed Jat power was on decline and ceased to be a serious challenge for Shinde and Holkar in the 1770s and 1780s.

Afghans too posed serious challenge to Shinde and Holkar in the expansion of Maratha power in the Doab region west of the Awadh state. Afghan mercenaries that Marathas faced in the North came to India in the 17th century. Rohillas homeland in India in the second half of the 18th century known as Rohilkhand lay

¹ Ibid., p.455

² Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.469; Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, pp.314-315, L F Smith, op.cit., pp.3-4

³ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, pp.463-464

⁴ SPD,(New Series), Bombay, 1962,Vol.3, p.8 & No.91

north and east of the Jat and Maratha boundaries. Falling in the main Doab region, Yamuna river formed the southern boundary of this Afghan territory identified as Sharanpur – Moradabad region. Najibs also known as Rohilla Afghans were a branch of the main Rohilla dynasty that was based in the plains east of the Yamuna bank and north of Delhi. Another Afghan group known as Bangash was based nearby the Awadh State boundary with the capital at Farrukhabad, north of the Yamuna Banks.... Najibs played much more prominent and powerful role in North India politics than the Bangash Pathans. Najib-ud-Daullah was the main Indian ally of Ahmad Shah Abdali.

The main strength of these Afghans was their infantry and cavalry armed with muskets as every soldier used a matchlock or a swivel/long guns while on the move.¹ This mobile musketry was an advantage for the Rohillas in the warfare against Maratha forces too both before and after Panipat.² Geographic location too helped Rohillas as two local advantages were in their favour. “Their strongholds were surrounded by dense bamboo hedges which were impenetrable to cavalry and artillery. And secondly the hills in their immediate north, with the thick sal forests and swamps called Tarai afforded them a safe refuge after any defeat in the plains, because no enemy could pursue them across these natural obstacles or survive the climate.”³ Dattaji Shinde was a witness to difficulties of pursuing Rohillas in their own tracts and fell victim to their musket fire before Panipat in 1760. Moreover, during the rainy season forces trying to launch an attack on Rohillas from Delhi side found it difficult to cross flooded Yamuna and Ganga rivers to get into Doab territory, an advantage that severely crippled Maratha forces in the course of the Battle of Panipat. Very fertile soil of the *Doab* and brisk horse trade also made Rohillas quite comfortable in financial terms.

Like the Jats, Marathas relations with the Afghans was factored and complex due to Shinde and holkars’ inner rivalry and independent dealings with them. Shindes were dead against Najibs where as Holkar enjoyed cordial relations which at times worked against Shinde especially during the run up to the third Battle of Panipat when Dattaji Shinde faced Najib-ud-Daulah’s forces in the *Doab* region, Rohillas knowing rivalry between Shinde and Holkar registered vital gains

¹ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, pp.51-52

² Ibid.,

³ Ibid., p.55

by allying with the Holkars. Mahadji Shinde was jealous of Tukoji Holkar's relations with Najib - ud - Daulah in 1770.¹ Holkar was probably trying to regain control over the *Doab* territories (conquered by Malhar Rao Holkar in the 1750s and granted to Holkar by the Peshwa) lost during the Battle of Panipat.

After Sawai Jai Singh's assistance to the Marathas in conquest of Malwa, in the second half of the 18th century Maratha relations with Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur were not cordial and Maratha expansion in Rajasthan remained unfulfilled after bloody wars against Jaipur and Jodhpur in the early 1750s. Another chapter dealing with Marathas position vis-à-vis Rajputs of Rajasthan shows how Marathas faced stiff resistance from bigger Rajput states throughout the period of their domination over eastern Rajasthan tracts between Malwa and Aravali ranges. Hostile conditions in the semi-arid country and Rajput *bhaums* from their *garhis*, their local strongholds too proved hostile and thwarted attempts by Maratha officials to settle the annexed territories.

But little innovation in their military organization and crippling financial positions due to constant Maratha demands for tribute weakened their inner strengths. Moreover, towards 1780s & 90s Rajput nobility on the outskirts of their parent state like rulers of Macheri, Karauli, Kishangarh, Kota, Salumbar chief started courting Shinde for their personal gains that bigger Rajput states lost out to Maratha forces.

Marathas in the beginning made most of the local elites' discontent with Mughal rule in their areas. Rajput zamindars and especially Nandlal Mandloi provided vital support to Maratha forces trying to enter Southern Malwa. Chhatrasal Bundela too made a difference by providing crucial support to Marathas in lieu of the help that Baji Rao provided in defeating Mohammad Khan Bangash. Not only Marathas were given a part of Bundela territory but military support in future campaigns. Sawai Jai Singh's support was crucial too as he was the man who was very close to the Mughals and knew all their secrets. After the Battle of Panipat it was Kota ruler Jhala Zalim Singh and rulers of Macheri, Karauli,

¹ *Foreign Department Records*, NAI, SC, 70(315-316), See, p.315 ...the Mahratta chief(Tukoji Holkar) and Nudjib -ud- Dowlah have had several conferences-the Marattas(Tukoji Holkar) have demanded and the latter has agreed to having their all the country between the Jumna and Ganga which they formerly possessed and which is now a part of the territories of Hafez Ramut Cawn...Tukoji Hoolkar transacts all affairs with Nudjib -ud- Dowlah of whom the other chiefs are ... jealous particularly Mahajee Sindhia.

Kishangarh who came to have close cooperation with Shinde which worked for both sides. However, Marathas were to face a host of local elites who were chosen to remain independent within their boundaries and created hurdles in the way of Maratha expansion. In Malwa Chandrawats of Rampura, Khichis of Raghogarh, Rana Chhatar Singh of Gohad, sons of Chhatrasal Bundela remained turbulent after accepting Maratha supremacy in the beginning. Loss in the Battle of Panipat led to opposition of Maratha rule in freshly conquered territories in Rajasthan, *Doab*, Bundelkhand and Northern Malwa as Rajputs, Jats and Afghans and Ahirs made a comeback. Maratha officials were driven away from their outposts in the above areas. In absence of widespread local support Maratha forces resorted to hectic military campaigns through out their stay in the North to curb the local resistance in far flung areas as it became difficult to collect tribute from already crisis ridden and economically hard pressed local elites. As we will see later it was only Southern Malwa under Holkar and areas around Ujjain under Shinde that Maratha rule was peaceful, in rest of the regions Marathas faced frequent oppositions from the local elites leading to military campaigns.

CHAPTER 3

RISE OF SHINDE AND HOLKAR FAMILIES IN MARATHA POLITICS

Rise of Shinde and Holkar in Maratha politics has its roots in the Maratha affairs in the Deccan after the release of Shahu from Mughal confinement in May, 1707. Political developments in Maharashtra after Aurangzeb's exit and Shahu's return and coronation as Chhatrapati in this context played an important role. Civil war and fluid political situation allowed a new generation of Maratha leaders to serve the Maratha state in its further rise and growth, with Peshwa as their leader and de-facto ruler. Peshwa ensured complete loyalty from relatively young and newly recruited Maratha sardars of humble origin and shielded his position against the fissiparous tendencies of older sardars of noble births and high expectations. This ensured inner stability at Poona court and greater successes as newly recruited sardars showed great devotion in their campaigns in order to get good rewards from the Peshwa. Shinde and Holkar family members showed exemplary courage and made many sacrifices to achieve Peshwa's policy of Maratha expansion in the erstwhile Mughal territories in the North. The Chapter traces early careers of Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde in the Peshwas army and their settlement as owners of household states in the period before the Battle of Panipat.

Shahu and Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath's rise to power complemented each other from the very beginning. In Balaji Vishwanath, Shahu found a man who mobilised the support of Maratha sardars and helped in organizing his army and administration at a time when some great internal opposition from her aunt Tarabai and other Maratha sardars like his commander-in-chief Chandrasen and Dabhade threatened his existence in Maharashtra. Even greater threats from Mughal *subadar* of Deccan Nizam-ul-Mulk soon started bothering him as the latter was appointed the *subadar* of Deccan in February 1713. In such times when both civil war and external threats combined to make Shahu's position unstable, Shahu's reliance on a humble and relatively inexperienced but loyal personality of Balaji Vishwanath was a tough and path breaking decision. It opened the doors for such aspiring persons to join the future Maratha government & army as Shahu and his

main trouble shooter Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath and his successor Bajirao reinvented Maratha power and supremacy from an extremely precarious situation.

Seeing the older Maratha sardars' loyalty waver and their self ambitious nature undermining larger cause of rebuilding Maratha power and supremacy in the Deccan, Balaji Vishwanath and his son Bajirao promoted new elements of humble origin in preference to older Maratha sardars of noble birth, in the new Maratha set up. Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde joined Peshwa's services as humble men at very low ranks in the army and were promoted by Peshwa as they showed great loyalty from the very beginning along with meritorious services that they rendered in the Peshwa's army.

As earlier said Shahu and Peshwa's rise to power complemented each other from the very beginning. Newer elements like Shinde and Holkar rode the wave of their success in Maharashtra and Central India as minor sardars with exemplary loyalty and courage. They all worked in tandem towards Maratha supremacy in the region.

Both Shinde and Holkar's role and position became important as in Shahu & Peshwa's scheme of things their loyalty never came to be questioned, at a time when tendency to join enemy's rank at slightest provocation was very common among other Maratha sardars of great repute. Moreover, their role became important and noticeable to both Peshwa and Shahu as it coincided with a very critical period in Maratha history. The very foundation of the Maratha state erected by Chhatrapati Shivaji and carried forward by Sambhaji and Rajaram stood shaken by Aurangzeb's campaigns. And now even after his return Shahu's initial years in Maharashtra were equally fraught with internal opposition and civil war as many of the sardars backed Tarabai's son Shivaji for the post of Chhatrapati. Also there was a general anarchy all over Maharashtra as Rajaram's policy of self finance and defense of Maratha territory had strengthened Maratha sardar's position as sovereign powers in their own locality, all over Maharashtra. Thus decades of uncertainty and disorder in Maharashtra were yet not over, after more than 20 years of warfare against the Mughals.

Shinde and Holkar joined Peshwa's services in such times when great rebuilding work of the lost Maratha power of Shivaji was in progress. With Balaji Vishwanath's death in 1720, his achievements in raising support for Shahu, arranging finance and raising a new army was now threatened once again by the

old Maratha sardars. In the initial years Bajirao's position as Peshwa was vulnerable as Dabhade and other sardars older than Bajirao found it difficult to accept him as their Peshwa.¹

A new group of sardars of which both Shinde and Holkar also formed a part, with their presence strengthened Peshwa's cause, providing reliable men to manage the upfront posts during the civil war against Dabhade and also in implementation of Bajirao's policy of Maratha expansion in the North.

MAHARASHTRA POLITICS OF EARLY 18TH CENTURY AND THE NEW INITIATIVE

Shahu's release by Bahadur Shah, the new Mughal Emperor after Aurangzeb's death in February 1707, brought hopes of revival of Maratha power that his grandfather Shivaji and father Sambhaji had created by uniting various ranks of Maratha sardars under one banner. But the task before Shahu after his arrival in Maharashtra was not easy given his upbringing in Mughal camp from his early childhood. In Tarabai, wife of his uncle Rajaram he met his toughest opponent for the post of Chhatrapati, Maratha seat of power created by his grandfather Shivaji. Tarabai claimed Maratha throne for her son Shivaji II, as she felt that Shahu's had lost the right after his father Sambhaji was succeeded by his uncle Rajaram. Since the death of her husband, Rajaram in 1700, Tarabai had been at the helm of Maratha affairs leading the war against Aurangzeb and enjoyed the support of several important Maratha sardars in the region.

As we know, just before the arrival of Shahu, the whole of Maharashtra was disturbed and divided. Locally powerful sardars had taken control over their areas for its administration and defense from the Mughal forces, a policy devised by Rajaram. Sovereign power and authority in each area rested with the locally powerful Maratha sardars. But after Aurangzeb's death as Mughal threats subsided Maratha sardars broke loose. In absence of an external enemy now Maratha sardars were at large aggrandizing their own positions in the Maratha countryside, often encroaching upon others as Tarabai tried to manage them by claiming her son Shivaji II as the next Maratha king.

¹ *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar* (henceforth SPD), G S Sardesai (ed.), Vol.12, Bombay, 1931, See Introduction

Such was the scene when Shahu was released by Aurangzeb's son and the next Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah. However, with the news of the release of Shahu, quite a number of Maratha sardars came to welcome him as their new leader, as he arrived in Khandesh after crossing Narmada. More supporters gathered around him when he was received in Maharashtra.

But Tarabai opposed Shahu's claims for the position of Chhatrapati and with council of ministers' support behind her; a period of civil war began in Maharashtra as Shahu marched towards Satara to take up his position as Chhatrapati. Shahu's success in winning over Tarabai's Senapati Dhanaji Jadhav to his side gave him an upper hand in the battle of Khed against Tarabai, towards the end of 1707. Tarabai vacated the capital town of Satara and went to Panhala fort. Shahu's coronation on 12th January 1708 as Chhatrapati at Satara took place after Tarabai's Sachiv and Pratinidhi too came forward to express their support for him. Tarabai was pursued by Shahu up to Panhala and made to run and take refuge at Malvan on the west coast, giving him moral victory over her opponent.

Having taken over as Chhatrapati and relieved of Tarabai's threats for the time being Shahu faced another serious challenge as he suffered the loss of his senapati Dhanaji Jadhav in June 1708, due to sudden illness. Dhanaji's son Chandrasen Jadhav's loyalty was suspect as he showed his inclinations towards Tarabai. To tackle the possible threats from the designs of Chandrasen, Shahu appointed Balaji Vishwanath to the post of *Senakarte* or organizer of forces, a position that diluted the office of commander-in-chief held by Chandrasen. Through the new position bestowed upon his trusted man Balaji Vishwanath, Shahu created an effective check on the power enjoyed by Senapati in his new set up in Maharashtra. Thus Shahu tackled the challenge from the older Maratha sardars many of whom were enjoying greater power than Shahu himself when he entered Maharashtra. Balaji Vishwanath played a crucial role as a crisis manager. He started winning over the support of powerful Maratha sardars and raising funds for Shahu by his tact and diplomacy.

Balaji Vishwanath had grass root experience of Maratha revenue administration as revenue clerk and later as *Sar-Subah* of Poona¹ and Daultabad

¹ SPD, G S Sardesai (ed.), Vol.7, Bombay, 1931, No.1 undated

under Ramchandrapant Amatya, Tarabai's minister and also as revenue collector of *Senapati* Dhanji Jadhav before he joined Shahu's services.¹

Probably Balaji had also known Shahu personally while he was in the Mughal camp nearby Poona during Aurangzeb's campaign against the Marathas. This earlier acquaintance probably made Balaji join Shahu's team after his arrival and was probably also instrumental in his victory over Tarabai in the battle of Khed. Initial recognition as a utility man in times of crisis and new position of *Senakarte* catapulted Balaji's career in the service of Shahu.

Senapati Chandrasen whose position had been weakened with the creation of a new post of *Senakarte* for Balaji Vishwanath, led to open hostilities between Chandrasen and Balaji in 1711.² Finally Chandrasen left Shahu's services and joined hands with Tarabai.³ Maratha sardars Parasuram Pant and Khanderao Dabhade sent to mediate and settle the matter between Chandrasen and Balaji, too proved unreliable as they were won over by Chandrasen. Even other like Damaji Thorat⁴, Krishnarao Khatavkar, Udaji Chavan rose against Shahu, only Balaji backed & supported Shahu's cause in such times.

Balaji regained the initiative as through friends and bankers he borrowed large sums of money and went about recruiting and organizing the king's own troops known as *Huzurat*. In 1712 and 1713 Balaji overcame the opposition of minor sardars Khatavkar, Thorat and Chavan supporting Tarabai.

Shahu's personal position also firmed up as Tarabai's forces started losing steam as there was no fund to maintain the army that she had mobilised. Supports from Chandrasen and Ramchandrapant weakened too, but the biggest blow for Tarabai was from her own family as Rajaram's second wife Rajasbai in order to make her son Sambhaji *Chhatrapati*, got Tarabai and her son arrested in the year 1714. Tarabai's arrest brought greater stability to Shahu's position as *Chhatrapati*.

Balaji's rise to the position of Peshwa from that of *Senakarte* in November, 1713 came in the face of incumbent Peshwa Bahiropan Pingle's arrest by Kanhoji Angre, a powerful Maratha *sardar* on the western coast who had lately been

¹ Sardesai, G S, *New History of the Marathas* (henceforth NHM), Vol.2, Bombay, 1958, pp.24-25

² SPD, Vol.7, No.13/11-10-1711

³ SPD, Vol.7, No.14/24-10-1711

⁴ Ibid.

favouring Tarabai and had captured several forts above the Ghats belonging to Shahu. Balaji was promoted to the position of Peshwa in 1713 in place of Pingle on condition that he would win over Kanhoji and he succeeded as he showed great diplomacy by winning over the support of Kanhoji Angre for the greater Maratha cause being pursued by Shahu as the Chhatrapati.

From here on Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath's position in Shahu's setup became firm as peace treaty with Kanhoji was historic in ramifications, several other Maratha *sardar's* came to accept Shahu's new position as *Chhatrapati* and became subordinate.

Shinde and Holkar's recruitment and confirmation in the services of Peshwa's army and their rise to higher positions as mentioned was strongly favoured by the Peshwa whose position along with that of Shahu was threatened many a times as they had to overcome the wavering loyalty and personal ambitions of older Maratha sardars. Examples of older Maratha sardars openly disagreeing and crossing over to enemy's side never stopped surfacing, arrival of Nizam in the Deccan further complicated Shahu's position. Many sardars were lured by Nizam to his own side.

This is very much clear from the role Dabhade family played in the formative years of Shahu's regime and even after they were humbled at Dabhoi in 1731. Chandrasen's case had already weakened Peshwa in the war against Tarabai and so had been the attitude of Dabhades. But Dabhades didn't stop there, their whole career shows why next Peshwa, Bajirao went for selection of a new and younger lot of sardars. In the initial years of Bajirao as Peshwa Dabhades once again started creating all sorts of trouble and Shahu tried his best to cover Bajirao's inexperience by granting favours to discontented lot of older Maratha sardars.¹

Several attempts at reconciliation by Shahu bore no positive results. Dabhades joined services of Shahu along with Dhanaji Jadhav in 1708, then crossed over to Tarabai side in 1711, again came back to join Shahu as his *senapati*, but discontented with the diminished role of *senapati* they started entertaining Nizam as both were opposed to Shahu and Peshwa's rise and growth in Maharashtra.

¹ SPD, Vol.12, See, Introduction

The rivalry between Peshwa and Dabhade commenced in 1708 when Shahu deprived the latter of his estates and conferred them on the former. Dabhades took this offense very seriously and created lot of trouble to both Shahu and the Peshwa for more than two decades.¹ Dabhades became insubordinate, discontented and rebellious; they were never reconciled to usurpation of their military powers.²

Dabhades relations with Shahu can be traced to the time when *senapati* Dhanaji Jadhav joined Shahu's services after his arrival in Maharashtra. He also gave an undertaking for Khanderao Dabhade's loyalty to the king probably before June 1708.³ But after Dhanaji's death and his successor Chandrasen's defection, Khanderao Dabhade too crossed over to Tarabai's side when he was sent to mediate the dispute between Chandrasen and Balaji in 1711.⁴ But his career with Tarabai's didn't last long, after arrest of Tarabai in 1714, his fortunes took a beating. That is how in 1715 his presence is recorded along with Kanhoji Bonsle as a part of the Maratha contingent involved in a campaign near Ujjain in Malwa.⁵

Dabhade was lured back by Shahu and appointed Senapati on 11 January 1717 this was probably after his son Trimbakrao Dabhade's appointment as *Senakhaskhel* on 20th November 1716.⁶ But soon he became unhappy with one of Shahu's *sardars* Devaji Somvanshi and wrote to Shahu in 1719.⁷ Despite rejoining Shahu's services, his forces were found creating trouble for Shahu's *sardars* in 1720⁸. In 1721 Khanderao expressed his displeasure to Shahu again over loss of his estates to Fateh Singh Bhonsle and on usurpation of his military function.⁹ But later in a letter written to Shahu he seemed to be in a reconciling mood as he expressed his feelings, "If he has failed to satisfy his master, his faults may be pardoned and he may be given some definite task to perform."¹⁰ But Dabhade's

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., No.1/1708

⁴ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.2, p.28

⁵ Ibid., p.43

⁶ *SPD*, Vol. 12, See, Introduction; see also Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol. 2, pp.35, 44, *SPD* dates for Khanderao may not be correct

⁷ *SPD*, Vol.12, No.3/1719-20

⁸ Ibid., No.4/15-81720

⁹ Ibid., No. 5/18-8-1721

¹⁰ Ibid.

problem with Shahu and his Peshwa and other sardars over one pretext or other continued, as his family members regularly complained to Bajirao¹ even after his demise in September, 1729; as his wife Umabai and son Trimbakrao Dabhade never stopped bickering.² Trimbakrao was made senapati by Shahu on 8th January 1730. Peshwa's interest in Gujarat and Khandesh which Shahu had assigned to *Senapati* as his sphere of activity brought both sides to conflict.

Shahu's attempt to reconcile the two sides by sending special messengers inviting Dabhades to Satara in 1730³ and his appeal to Bajirao that he didn't want such a powerful sardars to desert his side⁴ were in vain. Finding Dabhades getting involved with Nizam's activities against the Marathas, led Shahu to order a war against them, resulting in the famous battle of Dabhoi where Trimbakrao was killed on 1st April 1731. Dabhades were not reconciled as they took it to be political murder on the part of Peshwa. Khanderao Dabhades wife and other sons continued to work against Shahu and Peshwa, but after the battle of Dabhoi they were sufficiently weakened to pose any real danger to the Peshwa. Thus Dabhade's challenge ended. But still Nizam continued to be a threat on the other side.

Even in the Shahu versus Nizam conflict, along with Dabhade, there were other Maratha sardars who crossed over to Nizam's side leaving Shahu's position considerably weakened and endangered. Over the years Nizam had become quite powerful in the Deccan after long years of his stay in the Deccan as *subadar* right from 1713. When Nizam decided to rupture his ties with Delhi in 1724 to establish his own power in the Deccan, basing himself at Aurangabad in Maharashtra, Shahu's position was in danger. Nizam posed a direct threat to Bajirao's ambitions in Malwa and Khandesh as well as Maratha position in Maharashtra. Many Maratha sardars joined him leaving Bajirao's position quite endangered. Bajirao asked his brother Chimaji Appa to have a firm hold over Burhanpur as Nizam entered Deccan in 1724.⁵ Burhanpur was the principal Mughal mart and stronghold on way to Nizam's base at Aurangabad.

¹ Ibid., No.6,7,8,9,13,15

² Ibid., No.18, 26

³ Ibid., No.35/1-1-1730

⁴ Ibid., No.42/2-12-1730

⁵ SPD, Vol.10, No.30/1724

But Bajirao couldn't keep his sardars together from Nizam's clout. Nizam's powerful position made many of the Maratha sardars believe more in him than Shahu and Peshwa, as after all he had been in Deccan for a long time as the Mughal *subadar*. Such was Nizam's clout that many sardars left Bajirao to join Nizam. However Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar didn't show any inclination to join Nizam. The mutual jealousies and bickering of various sardars are reflected in several papers from the *Peshwa Daftar*.¹ Shahu's letter to one of his sardars in 1728 when most of them were getting drawn towards Nizam's luring tactics explains the situation as perceived by Maratha central leadership:

*"You have been a loyal Hindu servant of the state and as such we have all along dealt with you very kindly. You have nevertheless deserted to the enemy taking offence at something we do not know, and are endeavouring to ruin the Maratha state. What do you gain by spoiling your loyalty? Such conduct is not right for persons like you. You know what fate traitors meet with. Therefore I beseech you to leave aside all wrongs, to remember your ancestry and to do good to the state without going over to the enemy, so that your conduct might command respect from your brethren. You must think rather of executing your commands and increasing favours from us. This alone will satisfy us. You must conquer enemy's kingdoms and establish Maratha posts at different places. You must create a strong army and punish the wicked enemies. We address this warning to you with full confidence that you have been a loyal servant of the state and as such would readily execute your master's commands. On no account should you molest the ryots in our swarajya but chastise the wicked enemies away. We trust you will take this warning in its proper spirit."*²

Nizam had also won the support of Kolhapur faction of Sambhaji promising to make Sambhaji Chhatrapati. Based at Aurangabad Nizam posed a serious threat to Poona in June 1728 when both Shahu and Peshwa were in Purandar.³ Taking advantage of their absence Nizam along with Sambhaji started creating disturbances in the north Poona district and had captured nearly all important places including Poona, the Maratha seat of power. He also arranged Sambhaji's marriage in a Sisodia Rajput family in order to crown him as Chhatrapati in place of Shahu. Nimbalkar, Thorat and several Maratha *sardars*

¹ SPD, Vol.17, See, Introduction: Shahu and Bajirao Administrative

² Ibid., No.12/ 1728

³ SPD, Vol.12, No.50/1731

took service under the Nizam.¹ Shahu's existence was severely threatened but Bajirao and his brother Chimaji Appa controlled the situation by launching attack on Burhanpur and Aurangabad to divert Nizam's attention. Nizam was forced to march away from Poona. Both armies met at Palkhed nearby Aurangabad. Most of Shahu's older sardars had left him it was Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde on whom Bajirao had all his hopes. Ranoji pledged his life in service of Peshwa.² Malhar Rao played an important role too as he was stationed by Peshwa to watch and arrest the movements of Nizam at Palkhed, 20 miles west of Aurangabad, a hilly place with few escape routes, all of them under the control of the Maratha forces.³ Without provision of food and water Nizam finally came to the negotiating table, giving Peshwa Bajirao's guerilla tactics a moral boosting victory over Nizam's famed artillery.

Chandrasen Jadhav after splitting with Peshwa in the very beginning as he picked up a quarrel with Balaji Vishwanath in 1711, joined Tarabai, got eliminated later from her side as well, in the end again he courted Peshwa Bajirao and expressed his readiness to execute Bajirao's commands and assured him of his full friendship in letter written some time in 1730s.⁴

Separatist tendency of Dabhades was probably the last hurdle in the way of Peshwa's supremacy in Shahu's court. Balaji Vishwanath's work of strengthening Peshwa's hand was continued by his son Bajirao. Dabhades final conflict with Peshwa at Dabhoi was over the issue of collection of revenues from the rich state of Gujarat over which a dispute was on in the court of Shahu⁵ who had adopted a softer attitude towards the Peshwa family being his main trouble shooter. Khanderao Dabhade died in 1729 and the issue of control over Gujarat made Dabhades ally with Nizam who too wanted to defeat Marathas after Palkhed fiasco. Dabhades even got in touch with *subadar* of Malwa Muhammad Khan Bangash whom Bajirao had defeated recently in Bundelkand while helping the cause of the local chieftain Chhatrasal Bundela.

¹ Ibid.

² Sardesai says, "Ranoji expressing his full loyalty declared his readiness to meet any eventuality and was even ready to sacrifice his life for the Peshwa." See Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol. 2, p.106

³ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol. 2, p.108

⁴ *SPD*, Vol.17, No.31/ 6-1-1736

⁵ *SPD*, Vol.12, No. 33/1729

Ranged against such an impressive line up mobilized by Dabhades, Bajirao met them at Dabhoi near Baroda in 1731 when all attempts of peaceful negotiations were shunned by Dabhades. Peshwa was victorious at Dabhoi as Trimbakrao Dabhade was killed on the battlefield, potentially weakening Dabhades as they could never comeback so forcefully. With their strongest rival weakened, the path was clear for unchallenged supremacy in Maratha politics hereafter.

With the quick successes between 1728-1731 at Palkhed against the Nizam, against Mughal commanders Giridhar and Daya Bahadur at Amjhera, against Muhammad Khan Bangash in Bundelkhand and now over Dabhades at Dabhoi, Peshwa's power soared not only in Maharashtra but also outside his home land. Potential resistance from old sardars and threats from Nizam started getting weaker. Sardesai says, "In any critical emergency Bajirao was the person to whom Shahu looked to steer the vessel of the state safely out of troubled waters."¹ Bajirao also had support from his brother Chimanaji Appa who handled administrative affairs of Shahu. It is clear from many letters in his name pertaining to day to day affairs. "Being thus relieved of the onerous task of looking into administration details and financial problems, Bajirao found ample time to plan and carry out successfully his ambitious schemes of conquest," says Sardesai.² Later Bajirao repeated this tactics in Central India as he appointed Ramchandrababa Pant Shenvi and Naro Shankar to handle administrative affairs of Shinde and Holkar as he deployed both sardars in campaigns in the forward areas in the North.

Behind Peshwa getting stronger day by day and their successes in Malwa and Bundelkhand was the new support base that Bajirao had created after assuming the position of his father Balaji Vishwanath. Older group of sardars who proved unreliable and problematic gave way to a new lot. Among those who came forward to make Bajirao's winning combination were the Purandares, the Bhanus, the Bokils, the Hingnes, the Pethes. The Shindes, the Holkars, the Pawars were also among these new *sardars* who were extremely devoted and ready to give their best for success in any Maratha ventures.

¹ SPD, Vol.17, See, Introduction: Shahu and Bajirao Administrative

² Ibid.

Shinde and Holkar together anchored Maratha power in Central and North India in very difficult times for the Peshwa, almost the same way as Balaji Vishwanath and Bajirao did for Shahu in Maharashtra. This was after their initial phase of training as Bajirao's sardars in campaigns both inside Maharashtra as well as in Gujarat, Khandesh and Malwa in the 1720s as Bajirao was consolidating his position against Dabhades, Nizam and *Subedar* of Malwa.

Both Shinde and Holkar actively participated in the first big successes of Bajirao within Maharashtra and later also Gujarat and Central India. As earlier mentioned both formed part of Bajirao's forces in the successful campaign against Nizam at Palkhed. The same year before launching the campaign against Malwa's Mughal *Subadar* Giridhar Bahadur and Daya Bahadur it was Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde's prior experiences of campaigns and estimate of its resources that made Bajirao to go after the wealth of Malwa in times of crisis. "Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Holkar revealed to their master the prospect of some signal achievement and quick gains."¹

Early Careers of Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar

Bajirao's future policy of Maratha expansion in the North across the Narmada river by encouraging Shinde and Holkar to conquer territories assigned to them in *sarnjams* provided the right opportunity to both sardars to rise in their careers from ranks of *shiledar* to masters of their own estates. Major portion of western Malwa and Khandesh were granted to Shinde and Holkar as rewards for their distinguished services as Bajirao and his son Balaji Bajirao's Maratha expansion policy met with success in Malwa and further North. Their future ties with their villages of origin in Maharashtra became more and more ceremonial as they managed every thing from their new bases.² The two chiefs made Central India their new homeland with headquarters at Ujjain and Indore. How they rose to such positions from their village background in Maharashtra is widely discussed.³

¹ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.2, p.111

² *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, A B Phalke(ed), Vol.1, L.62/1-7-1747, the document refer to Shinde's headquarter at Ujjain as *Pargana Haveli* Ujjain

³ See works of John Malcolm, John Hope, G B Malleson, M W Burway, H Keen, V R Natu, J P Saranjame, Mukund Rao Agaskar, NV Rajyadhyaksha, For details on these works See Bibliography

Ranoji Shinde joined the services of Balaji Vishwanath under Shahu's regime. He belonged to Konherkhed village 6 *kos* from Koregaon Taluka in Maharashtra.¹ Shinde's promotion in the services of Peshwa in the period of Bajirao came through an official of Bajirao, Ramchandra Baba Sukhanthkar when he was placed to serve in the court of Bajirao. Here an incident involving Ranoji while Ramchandra Baba and Peshwa Bajirao had gone to meet Chhatrapati Shahu attracted attention of both as Ranoji was spotted deep in sleep clasping the pair of sleepers of the Peshwa.² Seeing the loyalty, Shinde was recommended for higher responsibilities by Peshwa and was made a Shiledar in the Peshwa's army.

Malhar Holkar too had a very humble beginning as he belonged to a goatherd family of Dhangar caste, living in the Hol village located on the north bank of river Nira in Chandor (Chandwad) taluka of Maharashtra.³ Since his father had died, he lived with his maternal uncle and mother in west Khandesh. Here local Maratha *sardar* Kanthaji Kadam Bande first spotted him as a person with great future. Bande was active in western Khandesh independently and later also came close to both Peshwa and Dabhade. Later Malhar was recruited as *shiledar* by Bande after he showed leadership skills in an incident that led Bande's retreating troops to victory as they were trying to reduce a rebel Bhil village but initially had to run. Holkar being present nearby led the forces and captured the Bhil stronghold.⁴ Impressed with Malhar's military skills Bande recruited him in his contingent to command 100 *sawars*.⁵ But later Malhar left Bande's service due to disagreement on some matter⁶ and went on recruiting men to form his own contingent.⁷ He met Tukoji Holkar his future partner at Wafgaon who joined his services with ten horsemen and later at Boregaon Tukoji's brothers Santaji and Rorji Holkar also joined Malhar's contingent.⁸ Next Malhar was negotiating through Bapuji Prabhu (Probably Bapuji Sonaji Dighe who worked from

¹ Rajadhyaksha, N V, *The True History of the Scindias*, Bombay, 1907, p.25

² Ibid.,

³ Mohan Singh, *Waq -i -Holkar*, Jadunath Sarkar(trans.), typescript, Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, p. 2

⁴ Ibid., p. 4

⁵ Ibid., p.5 ; *SPD*, Vol.17, No.1/ 1721

⁶ *SPD*, Vol.17, No.1/ 1721

⁷ Mohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.6

⁸ Ibid., p.6

Rajaram's days) to accept service with Mohansing, the Rana of Badwani: but Bapuji Prabhu recommended him to the Peshwa.¹ However another source says, "Malhar joined the services of Rana of Badwani" before going to Satara.²

During these years in wilderness after leaving Bande's service probably he also came in touch with Nandlal Mandloi, the *chaudhuri* of *pargana* Kampel (Indore).³ But it seems he fell out with the Badwani chief in 1720 as he informed Nandlal about his strained relations with Rana and sought his advice.⁴ Next it seems he approached Anibaji Purandare⁵ a high ranking Maratha *sardar* with Peshwa Bajirao through Bapuji Prabhu⁶ whom he addressed a letter describing his earlier career. At Satara through Ambaji & Bapuji, Holkar was recruited into the services of Bajirao in 1721 as *Shiledar*.

According to Mohan Singh, the Persian Chronicler in the period of Jaswantrao Holkar, "by the time Malhar reached Satara for his appointment, his contingent had strength of 2,000 horsemen" which is subject to further verifications.⁷ But Jadunath Sarkar says that Balaji Vishwanath took Malhar with him to Delhi during his expedition which lasted from November 1718 to March 1719, on the basis of Holkar's *Kaifiyat* documents. At that time Malhar accompanied Bajirao with 20 to 25 retainers.⁸ Holkar accompanied Bajirao as a Pindari, probably in the true sense of camp follower that Pindaris later came to represent. He was in Balji's company through out the expedition which made a halt at Sipri –Kolaras on the return journey where Malhar was present.⁹

Peshwa appointed Naro Shankar as his agent in Malwa to work with Malhar Holkar & Udaji Pawar who was probably also to work as their *Kamavisdar* & *Diwan* as he reports tribute collection from Nandlal Mandloi in the year 1729.¹⁰

¹ SPD, Vol.17, No.1/ 1721

² *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, V V Thakur(ed), Vol.1, Indore, 1944, No.2/1720

³ Ibid.,

⁴ Ibid.,

⁵ SPD, Vol.17, No.1/ 1721

⁶ Ibid., May be he was Bapuji Sonaji Dighe who worked from Rajaram's days,

⁷ Mohan Singh, *Waq -i -Holkar*, p. 6

⁸ from *Holkaranchi Kaifiyat*, 2-4 quoted in Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, Bombay, 1971, p.209

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.13/1729 & No.22/8-7-1731

In the beginning all tribute collections made in Malwa were managed by Naro Shankar and he only paid the salary of Malhar Holkar's officials as per latter's orders as Malhar Rao was busy in campaign and hardly had time to look after administration of his *saranjam*. Malhar Rao had good relations with Naro Shankar and on his recommendations Naro Shankar rose to become a high ranking Maratha sardars in the Peshwa's service.¹

In July 1731, Malhar made arrangements to administer his *saranjam* in Malwa by appointing Ramaji Yadava Palshikar on the post of Khasnis and granted him the village (*mauza*) of Mandwi in place of the local incumbent Shivram Krishna.² Gangadhar Yeshwant Chadrachud too joined Holkar's service through the influence of Ambajipant Purandare around this time. He was in the Holkar's service for a long period 1734 to 1774, as his *diwan*.³ In 1740 Peshwa divided the nature of duties to be performed by Ramaji Yadava Palshikar and Gangadhar Yeshwant Chandrachud in the court of Holkar indicating substantial increase of territory and military responsibilities of Malhar Rao Holkar.⁴ Now onwards these officials replaced Naro Shankar in administration of Holkar's *daulat*.

Tracking Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar's activities under Peshwa before 1740; they are found deputed on regular campaigns within Maharashtra as well as in Gujarat and Malwa and Rajasthan. This might be termed as the training phase in their careers when they came to closely watch Bajirao's skills in mobilizing his forces.

Ranoji accompanied Bajirao to the battlefield in 1724 when Nizam fought against Mubariz Khan at a place called Sakharkheda 50 miles east of Aurangabad in Mehkar district on the banks of Purna River, nearby Burhanpur.⁵ Ranoji Shinde's presence here comes to light in an account paper, rupees 10 was paid for dressing wounds of Nizam's troops received in the fight against Mubariz Khan as probably Bajirao's was backing Nizam.⁶

¹ Ibid., No.28/1732

² Ibid., No.20/8-7-1731

³ SPD, Vol.17, No.43/ prior to 1734

⁴ *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, No.50/21-10-1740

⁵ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.2, pp.90-91; Rajadhyaksha, N. V., op.cit., p.26

⁶ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.2, p. 91

Their movements around this time were directly reported to Bajirao. The first officially recorded appearance of Ranoji is in the year 1727 when he reports his presence as per Bajirao's directions at place called Nighoj and is waiting for the arrival of Holkar, Pawar and Kanthaji Kadam Bande.¹

Both were present and played a role when Bajirao led the Maratha campaigns against Nizam and the Mughal *subadars* of Malwa in 1728.

It must be said that both were made to face the most hostile conditions and a very hectic schedule thanks to Bajirao's policy of Northward expansion. The campaigns intensified after Bajirao's decisive victories in the last few years, against the Nizam in 1728, against Mughal governors Giridhar & Daya Bhadur later in the same year, against Mohammad Khan Bangash in April, 1729 and then against old rival Dabhades at Dabhoi in Gujarat in 1731. Both worked hard to achieve Bajirao's goal of Maratha expansion in the North, attempting to conquer and collect tribute from Rajasthan and Malwa, especially after Gujarat option was closed for them in favour of Dabhades because Shahu also wished the same.

In 1729 both were sent to Marwar along with Anandrao Pawar and Kanthaji Kadam Bande.² As Marwar was far off, Ranoji was away for a long period of time than usually he used to be, his father Jankoji Shinde enquired about Ranoji's whereabouts and his performance in Bajirao's entourage in a letter written to the Peshwa, probably later in the year.³

Malhar Holkar was party to Bajirao's campaign against Dabhades in Gujarat in 1730-1731 that led to the Battle of Dabhoi. Holkar writes to Chimaji on 18th November 1730 that he would join them at Dhulia Songir.⁴ Both Bajirao and Chimaji had left Poona on 30th October 1730⁵ and it seems at that time Malhar was on duty at some other location.

Ranoji's sincerity towards Peshwa is evident when he took initiative as trouble erupted at Pawagad in October, 1732, proceeding there in person to control the situation, after informing Peshwa about this latest development.⁶

¹ SPD, Vol.10, No.41/ 19-12-1727

² SPD, Vol 13, No.49/22-7-29

³ SPD, Vol.13, No.53/1729

⁴ SPD, Vol.12, No. 40/18-11-1730

⁵ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.2, p.138

⁶ *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar (SPD)*, New Series, P M Joshi (ed.), Vol. 1, Mumbai, 1957, No.13/16th October 1732

At the beginning of 1733, Malhar and Ranoji had their first success against the mighty Jai Singh at Mandisor.¹ Peshwa kept a close watch on this campaign taken up by his young and promising sardars, Kusaji Ganesh informed him from Makdai about the movements of Ranoji Shinde, Malhar Rao Holkar and Pilaji Jadhav.² Both succeeded in inflicting a defeat on the Mughal *Subadar* ³ Sawai Jai Singh who agreed to pay rupees six lakhs in cash and a tribute to be levied over the twenty eight parganas under him⁴

After their success against Jai Singh in 1733 at Mandisor, they were in Bundi in 1734 on invitation from local chief Pratap Singh Hada and attacked Bundi capturing the fort.⁵ This was their second success in a row and first in Rajasthan as Peshwa's sardars after they had begun to independently handle campaigns in the North.

Again in 1734, both were reportedly also on the way to distant Rajasthan for their second campaign against Rathors of Marwar. During the Marwar campaign, "apart from minor skirmishes, they had severe encounter with Rathor forces at Merta," as they themselves reported, "the intense fight put up by Maratha forces which led to evacuation of the town by the inhabitants".⁶

But their biggest success came when they confronted the combined Rajput & Mughal forces led by Sawai Jai Singh & Mughal noble Khan Dauran in 1735 on Malwa Rajasthan borders and defeated them by cutting off their provisions and outplayed the heavy and unwieldy Mughal forces by guerilla tactics of lightning raid. Jai Singh had to rush back to Jaipur as Ranoji and Malhar approached very close, merely 20 miles from Jaipur.⁷ For the first time Maratha forces invested areas far deeper within Jaipur territory than any previous Maratha raid must have made.

¹ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1971, p. 153

² *SPD*, Vol. 14, No. 11/1733

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 153

⁴ *SPD*, Vol. 14, No. 2/16-3-1732, the year is 1733 and not 1732 as given here, see Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 153

⁵ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 156

⁶ *SPD*, Vol. 14, No. 14/23-4-1734, the date given here seems to be that of their Bundi campaign of 1734

⁷ *SPD*, Vol. 14, No. 24/12-4-1735; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, pp. 157-158

Ranoji and Malhar had meetings and negotiations with Sawai Jai Singh and Khan Dauran after this successful campaign. Sound performance against such highly reputed men must have raised their status among the high ranking sardars of the Peshwa¹ as Bajirao came to know about their performances against Jai Singh & Mughals through the news letters of 12th April & 16th May 1735.² After this glorious campaign Ranoji retired to Ujjain³ where later he was to establish his headquarters in the coming years. Peshwa encouraged by the success asked him to raise more troops before the next campaign after the rainy season.

The first rewards for the loyal services and for playing an important role in the Battle of Palkhed went to Malhar Rao Holkar in August 1728. Holkar was assigned widely dispersed and unconquered areas in saranjam the North outside Maharashtra.⁴ This happened four months after the battle of Palkhed.⁵ It was a very vague grant which allotting him *parganas* in Khandesh, Gujarat, Malwa, Bundelkhand and even in Marwar.⁶ Only Khandesh by then had been conquered and rest of the *parganas* allotted were to be conquered and settled. It was meant to meet the expenses on armed contingent that he was to maintain for services in the Peshwa's army.

Shinde and Holkar were expected to conquer more territories for Peshwa and were encouraged to settle them to meet their financial requirements. Resources were to be generated locally to fund the army and future campaigns in the region. In June, 1732 Peshwa effected a much more specific division of areas in Malwa between Holkar, Shinde and Pawar. 2/5th of the territory of Malwa was assigned to Malhar Rao Holkar for the maintenance of his army.⁷ Around this time only Ranoji Shinde requested his share of tribute in Malwa to be settled.⁸

Grant of areas in access to Malhar and Shinde in comparison to those made to Pawar was probably the reason for latter's stand against Peshwa and in March 1733 during Maratha campaign near Mandsaur Peshwa's specially deputed man

¹ SPD, Vol.14, No.26/ April, 1735; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, p.158

² SPD, Vol.14, No.24/12-4-1735 & No.29/16-5-1735

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, pp.158-159

⁴ SPD (New Series), Vol. 1, No.6/August 1728; *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.10

⁵ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.2, p.138

⁶ SPD (New Series) Vol. 1, No.6/August 1728

⁷ *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.26/1732

⁸ SPD (New Series) Vol. 1, No.13/16th October 1732

Kusaji Ganesh, reported collusion of Pawar with Mughal *Subadar* of Malwa, Sawai Jai Singh, against Shinde and Holkar.¹ In retaliation Holkar later plundered a part of Udaji Pawar's baggage before mutual friends' intervened.² This particular incident was probably the beginning of the decline of Pawar brothers in the service of Peshwa. Pawars were till then very actively involved in the campaigns in Gujarat and Malwa and were highly ranked and reputed Maratha *sardars*. But of course, also of noble birth, unlike Shinde and Holkar, probably the reason why they couldn't digest Peshwa's discrimination towards them in the allotment of *saranjam* in 1732. Their personal ambitions marred their progress; they did at one point of time try to get in touch with Dabhades/Nizam possibly to join their ranks. Due to growing antagonism with Peshwa as well as Shinde and Holkar their credibility became suspect and Peshwa checked their rise by freezing grants to them, in future considering only Shinde and Holkar for his expansionist designs in the North once Khandesh and Malwa was secured in 1741.

Shinde and Holkar's fierce loyalties and togetherness naturally also bred jealousies among themselves. First differences between Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar comes to light in 1735 when Ranoji complains twice within a month to Chimanji Appa about Malhar's delaying tactics, Ranoji was ready to move, during the course of an attempted campaign, but Malhar's lethargy was causing him debts on accounts of the expense of the army. He asks Chimaji for speedy and explicit orders.³ By this time Ranoji had assembled a cavalry force of around 4000 horses under his command as he informed Chimaji that according to instructions he was collecting forces and trying to proceed on the assigned campaign.⁴

Whether at this point of time Shinde and Holkar were part of Peshwa's think tank and were in the category of other recognized members acting as Peshwa's advisors like Pilaji Jadhav, Ambaji Purandare is a subject matter of further enquiry. But their deputation on far off missions even in Rajasthan on regular basis from their bases in Maharashtra meant they had become reliable and delivered as per the expectations of the Peshwa. Peshwa's agent Naro Shankar accompanied Holkar and also looked after tribute collection as Malhar

¹ SPD Vol.14, No.2/16-3-1732/33

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. 1, p.153

³ SPD, Vol.14, No.33/22-9-1735 & No.36/9-10-1735

⁴ Ibid. No.36/9-10-1735 ... आमच्या पथकाची गणती अजमासे च्यार हजार होईल

concentrated on Military affairs. Some times, Pilaji Jadhav and Pawar brothers' contingent too moved side by side Holkar's contingent during the campaigns. And Holkar definitely seized the initiative from them as he led Maratha forces in successive victories in 1733 & 1735. Also Pawar's credentials had become suspect after his attempts to help Jai Singh against them during the Maratha victory at Mandsor in 1733. Pilaji Jadhav and Peshwa's specially appointed nominee Kusaji Ganesh were witness to their glorious successes and must have spread right words about their performance. Jadhav was in direct touch with Peshwa and regularly reported about their performance. Malhar Holkar's name also appears in the list of prominent persons to whom the customary sugar and sesamum seeds were sent by the Peshwa on the occasion of *Tilasankranti*, a Hindu festival, towards the end of Bajirao's reign.¹

Ranoji Shinde's position also seems to have become powerful in his own locality in Maharashtra. Janoji Nimbalkar wrote to Chimaji Appa, asking him to write to Tulajbai Shinde wife of Ranoji Shinde to release the poor Brahman Dhondo Akdeo whom she had kept in confinement. The letter also refers Janoji Nimbalkar accusing Shinde *vakil* Ramchandra Baba Pant Shenvi (Babajipant) for ill-treatment being met to the Brahman Dhondo.²

These successes took their career a long way in the service of Peshwa Bajirao as victory against Jai Singh and Khan Dauran was only next to Peshwa's successes against Nizam and Dabhade. They were among the highest officers leading Bajirao's campaign in the North and their military prowess was now accepted by the local chiefs of both Malwa and Rajasthan.³ After victory over Bundi chief, Dalel Singh, Bundi queen tied the *Rakhi* thread around the wrist of Malhar Rao, publicly declaring him her brother.⁴

Battle of Bhopal in 1738 against the Mughal forces led by Nizam provided another opportunity for both sardars to serve the Peshwa. Again Malhar & Ranoji played a crucial role in the Maratha victory, making Nizam surrender as Mughal forces were surrounded from all sides and their provisions were cut off. After this significant victory Mughal Emperor granted Malwa *suba* to the Marathas formally

¹ SPD, Vol.17, No.84/ 7-1-1739

² Ibid., No.121/not dated

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, pp.161-2

⁴ Ibid., p.156

through a *farman* issued in 1741 and the real beneficiaries were Shinde and Holkar whose grants made from time to time so far now got legitimized even from the Mughals. After Bajirao's death too expansion in the North didn't halt, after two decades of campaign in Malwa, in the 1740s focus shifted to Bundelkhand, Rajasthan and *Doab* regions, areas in these regions located on the outer rim of the Malwa Plateau could be easily approached from Malwa. Marathas built bases in Malwa for regrouping and reviving the tired spirit during the campaigns across the Chambal and Yamuna rivers.

The first phase (1720-1740) in the rise of Shinde and Holkar coincided with Maratha conquest of Malwa in which the leaders of the first generation from both the families played significant roles. Both *sardars* became Peshwa's leading military commanders for military campaigns in a span of 10 years. Maratha victories that started at Palkhed in 1728 against Nizam and was rounded off with the victory over Mughal forces led by Nizam near Bhopal in 1738 led to the rise in position of both Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar. Holkars in comparison to Shinde made rapid progress. It seems Malhar enjoyed much better financial situation with the lavish grants made to him, due to his distinguished role in Peshwa's campaigns so far compared to his junior partner Ranoji.

In case of Shindes, Ranoji had tougher life to live as he was constantly facing financial problems and often lived in debt before Peshwa's grants in 1732 probably relieved him. But again it seems he was in tight financial situation in 1735 as he complained to Chimaji about greater financial burden on account of Malhar's tactics of slow march during the campaigns. Ranoji during this period ranked behind Malhar and even 10 years later till his death in 1745.

On the whole the Maratha scene at Poona had changed in favour of Peshwa and his favoured sardars due to Bajirao's successful leadership. Shinde and Holkar joined Peshwa's service while Maratha state was going through a transition phase, Peshwa's position was becoming that of a de-facto ruler and *Chhatrapati* Sahu's role was taking a backseat in Maratha politics. With their cooperation Peshwa was feeling secure in his position from the threats posed by older sardars and rival powers eyeing Maratha seat at Poona. Early military successes and fine performances during the campaigns brightened the careers of Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde. Peshwa Baji Rao's grants of territories in Khandesh and Malwa to both Shinde and Holkar laid the foundation for their long and

distinguished service as leading Maratha sardars as other sardars of dubious distinctions were sidelined from Peshwa's expansionist designs in the North, once Khandesh and Malwa had been secured in 1741. Bande and Pawar so far active in western Khandesh and Gujarat in Maratha expansion were left out in the cold when Peshwa distributed tracts in Malwa to Shinde and Holkar. Pawars' share of tracts distributed by the Peshwa didn't match his position as senior Maratha sardars.

As in the beginning both sardars were assigned plenty of territories to conquer, they complemented each other in their campaigns to conquer more and more territories in Central India. This also served Bajirao's expansionist policy in the North. Thus till 1740s both Shinde and Holkar made rapid advances in Central India and Peshwa kept on making lavish grants of territories to them to establish Maratha supremacy and control in those areas which were so far a part of the Mughal Empire.

As soon as Maratha conquest of Malwa in 1738 and Mughal grant of Malwa *suba* in 1741 was complete, next Peshwa Balaji Bajirao guided Shinde and Holkar into Bundelkhand and Rajasthan. Bajirao's demise and succession by his son Balaji Baji Rao ushered a period of fresh conquests in Bundelkhand and Rajasthan. Next ten years were to open up fresh challenges for both Shinde and Holkar as Peshwa directed them to make inroads and conquer recalcitrant chieftains of Bundelkhand & Rajasthan regions. Unlike Khandesh & Malwa local elites in Bundelkhand and Rajasthan posed formidable challenges before accepting subordination to Maratha rule. In Bundelkhand Shinde and Holkar ran into difficulties as local chieftains of Bundelkhand were not easy to control, even during the Mughal period Bundela Rajputs had enjoyed freedom. Maratha control here lied in temporary subjugation of Bundela chiefs. Ranoji's son Jyotiba was killed by Bir Sinh Dev Bundela near Jhansi in one such campaign in 1742. Next on Peshwa's list of areas to be conquered were Rajasthan and Doab beyond the Chambal and Yamuna rivers on the borders of Malwa plateau. Rajasthan was being raided from early 1740s and initial successes were in and around Rampura, Kota and Bundi areas. After negotiations in 1735, as long as Sawai Jai Singh was alive Marathas practiced restrain while attempting campaigns in Rajasthan, especially they didn't venture into the territories of the bigger Rajput states of Jaipur, Udaipur and Jodhpur rather limited themselves to Rampura, Kota, Bundi

and Rajgarh areas near the Mukundra pass, those days the gateway to Rajasthan while approaching from the south, these were the soft targets being attempted at a time when Maratha policy in the North was coming to terms with the loss of two important personalities in Bajirao and Ranoji Shinde.

Balaji Bajirao continued the policy of Northward expansion but was not so much directly involved in the Maratha campaigns in the North as his father, he on the other hand concentrated more in the south, leaving North for his sardars Shinde and Holkar and his brother Raghunathrao.

Second generation of Shinde family seized the initiative in the 1740s and 1750s, made rapid progress, raising their status in the Peshwa's court, coming at par with Malhar Holkar. In the process sons of Ranoji Shinde fought like lions for the Peshwa's cause. Beyond the frontiers of Malwa and at Panipat sons of this family made great sacrifices for the expansion of Maratha power in the North beyond the Chambal river. Ranoji till his death in 1745, at Shujalpur, 30 kms from Bhopal had been subordinate to Malhar Rao Holkar, but not less in his loyalties towards Peshwa. With fresh blood of Ranoji's five sons in the battlefields, Shinde family rose much higher among the Maratha sardars of the Peshwa.

In Ranoji's life time only Jotiba Shinde one of his five sons sacrificed his life fighting for the Peshwa. In 1742 when his father was alive, on Peshwas order Jotiba was sent to collect *chauth* from the defiant Orchha ruler Birsinh Dev Bundela. Jotiba while camping near Jhansi in November 1742 was suddenly attacked and killed by Birsinh Dev Bundela.

In one of the most intense fights against the Rajputs, his eldest son Jayappa Shinde was murdered by angry Rathores of Marwar during the negotiations after year long siege at Nagor in 1755 because of his allegedly bitter remarks. Before laying down his life Dattaji Shinde carried Maratha flag right up to the Afghan borders during his campaigns in the North. He led a fight back against the Jodhpur forces at Merta in 1755 when Jayappa was killed and Jankoji Jayappa's son was a minor present in the Shinde camp. Dattaji Shinde lost his life while fighting the advancing army of Abdali, he was killed by a bullet shot from Najib's Rohilla soldiers at Barari Ghat on the river Yamuna in Haryana on 10th January 1760. Jayppa's son Jankoji Shinde was injured in the same attack as the two had come to defend their kinsman Sabaji Shinde who was manning the check post at the Ghat

with only a few soldiers.¹ Later Jankoji was wounded on 14th January 1761 during the Battle of Panipat and was captured along with Ibrahim Khan Gardi and later put to death.² Tukoji Shinde also died during the battle of Panipat fighting against the Afghan forces. Mahadji Shinde escaped death at Panipat in 1761 at the hands of a Afghan soldier who wounded him in the leg. He was picked up unconscious by a passing water carrier named Rana Khan and brought to Shinde's headquarter Ujjain.³ Mahadji Shinde thus only survived in 1761 as all other sons of Ranoji had died fighting against the Maratha enemy. After recovering from the injury at Ujjain, Mahadji went to Poona and again joined Peshwa in December 1762 in the siege of Miraj in Maharashtra.

Malhar also lost his son Khanderao during his lifetime. Khanderao was killed while fighting against the Jat forces of Surajmal near Kumbher fort in 1754. Malhar himself received wounds during the Battle of Mangrol/Bhatwara in November 1761 as he took the side of Kota ruler against the forces of Madho Singh. "Malhar's skin was grazed by a bullet"⁴ which proved fatal later as the wound developed to serious proportions later making paralyzing his routine military activities. However, it is also said that his son and grand son preferred easy life and indulged in drinking and merry making before their untimely deaths, possibly the cause of their lagging behind Shinde, once Malhar had quit the scene in 1766 due to his death.

Shinde and Holkar's Settlements in Central India

Fine performance by Malhar Rao Holkar in the military engagements against Nizam in the Battle of Palkhed in 1728 brought him good rewards from the Peshwa. A *sanad* from Peshwa dating back to August 1728 shows him getting *saranjam* grants covering 2 *parganas* in Khandesh, 6 *parganas* in Gujarat, 9 *parganas* in Malwa, also villages in Juner and areas in Marwar and Bundelkhand. Out of this only Khandesh was by then under Maratha control rest all were to be conquered and settled by Malhar Rao.

¹ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.2, pp.424-425

² Ibid., p.459

³ Ibid., p.510

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.363

Ranoji however, wasn't so fortunate and in a letter dated 16th October 1732 requests Peshwa to grant him areas in Malwa as he was facing shortage of money to pay his expenses during the campaigns. Peshwa seem to have acted promptly after getting to know of Ranoji Shindes plight. And redistribution of areas in Central India took place among three of his leading sardars Holkar, Shinde and Pawar in the year 1732.

Lavish distribution of territories in Malwa to Shinde and Holkar showed growing reliance of the Peshwa on them as old Maratha sardars were not loyal to him. In a latter dating back to 1731, just a year before the redistribution of territories in Malwa, Dhondo Ram, Peshwa's representative in Khandesh, informed Peshwa about refusal of Santaji and Raghuji Kadam, Pilaji Gaikwad and some other old sardars to pay annual collection from areas allotted to them. Dhondo Ram in such circumstances wrote his difficulties in realizing the full amount from Khandesh.

1732 onwards, there was no stopping in the careers of Shinde and Holkar as fresh areas were regularly added in their family's name by way of grant by Peshwa as they showed loyalty and bravery in their campaigns. In 1740 Malhar Rao was conferred the title of *subhedar* which raised his position among the Maratha sardars operating under Peshwa. In 1745, in a letter from Poona Ram Chandra Ballal, *Kamavisdar* in Peshwa's directly controlled areas in eastern Khandesh was warned by Peshwa against disputing the *parganas* already granted to Malhar Rao Holkar showing Holkar's growing influence and supremacy among *sardars*. The same year both Shinde and Holkar were granted a joint *saranjam* of 5 *Mahals* in *Pargana* Nemawar. As both were regularly engaged in campaigns on the frontiers of Malwa and Bundelkhand in 1740s,¹ their holdings in Central India kept on growing by way of regular grants from Peshwa. In 1750, they again got fresh grants. More areas in Central India were granted to Malhar in 1752, specifically to meet expenses of the campaign in the North.

Shinde and Holkar while not on military duty for the Peshwas, were engaged in settling their allotted territories, this is evident from several Marathi letters from Holkar's official correspondences.² As early as 1736, Malhar is found

¹ See Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition* pp.288-296 for Shinde and Holkar's campaigns during the 1740s in Malwa & Bundelkhand,

² *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol I, No.15,20,22,24,25

encouraging agriculture work in and around Indore. Malhar sought the cooperation of the local elite in extension of his control in rural areas. He also settled areas by assigning areas to his own men from Maharashtra in different *parganas* allotted to him. In a letter dated 8th June 1736 Malhar Rao asks Tejakarna Mandloi and Kunwar Nyahalkaran of pargana Indore to exert themselves for the encouragement of agriculture work throughout the pargana. In another letter dated 10th March 1738 Malhar Rao granted half the *mokasa* of pargana Bardawad to Ramaji Pant for the maintenance of his *paga*.

In 1735, after campaign against Jay Singh & the Mughals Ranoji retired to Ujjain¹ where later he was to establish his headquarters in the coming years. Ranoji after reaching Ujjain started recruiting more men to his contingent on Peshwa's instructions. That year he seems to have camped in Ujjain during the rainy season and started on his next campaign after *Dussehra* from here only, thus starting a new routine that was to be followed for many years.² Later it was Mahadji who shifted his camp to Mathura after the Anglo-Maratha war. Peshwa appointed Ramchandra Baba, a Shenvi Brahman who was long time associate of Ranoji as his *diwan* to look after the administration work when he was himself busy in the campaigns.³

Shinde's allotments besides Ujjain were concentrated mostly in north-west Malwa and Kota region. The details on their settlement in and around Ujjain area are still sketchy but for the details of their operation from their headquarters at Ujjain. Those days areas under control of Shindes extended up to 60 *kos* from Ujjain⁴ But as no external power disturbed the peace around Ujjain, the area seems to have been well managed except for the period from 1761 to 1767 when dispute for the head of the family, between Mahadji and Kedarji Shinde destabilized the household. With Jankoji's death in 1761 at Panipat it seems Peshwa took Shindes estates under direct control. For the next 6-7 years as Mahadji faced protests from the widows of his slain brothers and as there was difference of choice for the head of Shinde family between Raghunathrao and Peshwa Madhavrao.

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, pp.158-159

² *SPD*, Vol.14, No. 33/22-09-1735 & No.36/9-10-1735

³ *SPD*, Vol.17, No.121/not dated ; Rajadhyaksha, N V, op.cit, p.46

⁴ Rajadhyaksha, N V, op.cit., p.47

Available *Gulgule Daftar* records throw light on Shindes management of tribute collection and administration in assigned areas from Ujjain, as they started operating from their new base in Malwa. But local details pertaining to areas around Ujjain are not mentioned. Ranoji is found writing to Maratha *vakil* Balaji Yashwant Gulgule. In a letter dated 26th December 1733, Ragho Vitthal, *Kamavisdar* of Raghogarh in north-west Malwa, nearby Kota informs Ranoji about appointment of Govind Vishwanath as *fadnis*. This was after their victory at Mandsaur against Jai Singh. Naturally they must have planted their officials in the nearby areas for collecting tribute. Thus it seems that after the victory at Mandsaur in 1733, Marathas started collecting tribute & settling areas nearby Kota. Peshwa had already assigned areas in north-west Malwa to Shinde in the year 1732, However there is a long gap before Balaji Yashwant Gulgule is mentioned in a letter dated 16th November 1742 as *Kamavisdar* of Peshwa and *vakil* of Shinde in the Kota region. Henceforth there is uninterrupted correspondence from Maratha *vakil* Gulgule showing that both in and around Kota and Ujjain, Shindes were consolidating their hold over territories allotted to them with their own men. Also Shinde were involved in campaigns in the forward areas just beyond the Malwa boundary into Rajasthan. Ranoji Shinde died in 1745 and his successor Jayappa Shinde took over as he was eldest of the five brothers; others were Jyotiba Shinde (who died during the life time of his father Ranoji), Dattaji Shinde, Tukoji Shinde and Mahadji Shinde. Shindes continued to be in company of Malhar Rao even after the death of Ranoji. However, they progressed slowly in 1740s under the shadows of Malhar Rao who enjoyed favourable relationship with Peshwa and commanded greater attention in the Poona court in the affairs of Malwa and Bundelkhand. Jayappa didn't get along well with Holkars from the beginning, as he took over as the chief of Shinde family after the death of his father Ranoji.

It was only in 1754 that Jayappa Shinde got independent command of Maratha forces in a campaign against Rathors of Marwar. Though Jayappa met his death in the hands of Rathors at Merta, his valour during the whole campaign certainly raised the name of Shinde family in the eyes of the Peshwa and the Poona court. His brother Dattaji took charge after his death and Jayappa's son Jankoji was made the head of the family. This marked the distinct rise of Shindes in Maratha army.

After Panipat, it was Mahadji, Ranoji's only surviving son who was to succeed to Shinde's *daulat* in Malwa. But his claim to Shinde family's prime post became controversial due to his low birth; Mahadji was born from an illegitimate wife of Ranoji. Widows in his family were not in his favour as he claimed the headship. Raghunath Rao's intervention further worsened the fluid situation at Ujjain, as he tried to make it an issue with his nephew Peshwa Madhav Rao, extending his civil war with him to Shinde's succession. He too opposed Mahadji and backed Mahadji's nephew Kedarji Shinde as the head of the *daulat* of Shinde family. Raghunath Rao even fixed the succession fee or *nazar* from Kedarji Shinde at rupees 8 lakhs in 1763.¹

Still Madhav Rao was in favour of Mahadji Shinde succeeding to Shinde family's prime post. As the domestic dispute between Raghunath Rao and Peshwa cast its shadows, Mahadji faced the ire of Raghunath Rao. In the summer of 1764 he left Poona for Ujjain much to the annoyance of Raghunath Rao who was then in charge of the affairs at the Maratha court in absence of the Peshwa. Raghunath Rao seeing Mahadji violate laws issued order for his arrest. Shinde opposed his pursuers and after reaching Ujjain took over the reins of power of Shinde family in his own hands despite Raghunath Rao's approval of Kedarji Shinde for the post. As Raghunath Rao and Peshwa, the two rival parties at Poona court asserted their power, conflicting arrangements were made for the succession in Shinde family. Orders issued by both Madahv Rao and Raghunath Rao contradicted each other.

Earliest orders from the Peshwa court confirmed the saranjam enjoyed by Jayappa Shinde, Dattaji Shinde and Jankoji Shinde to be continued to Kedarji Shinde & Mahadji Shinde in the year 1763.² But Raghunath Rao asserting his power ordered attachment of certain mahals of Shinde in 1765 mostly falling in Maharashtra.³ But before Mahadji's strong stand and after his march to Ujjain in 1764, Raghunath Rao couldn't do anything more than passing conflicting orders, as even Peshwa was in Mahadji's favour. Raghunath sent Naro Shankar to summon Mahadji to Poona court. "Mahadji was informed that if he came to the

¹ *Selections from the Satara Rajas and the Peshwas Diaries* (henceforth SSRPD), Vad, R.B.G.C. & K N Sane (eds.), Vol.I, Peshwa Madhavrao I, Pune and Bombay, 1911, L 159/ P.145

² Ibid., L 160/ p.145

³ Ibid., L.165/ p.150

Huzur and acted as desired by government, his offence would be condoned.”¹ But in the end the opposing faction at Poona court had to climb down from its stand against Mahadji and he was accepted as Shinde chief, an amount of Rs. 1,50,000 was received from Naro Shankar on account of *nazar* from Shinde.² As Mahadji took over after disobeying Raghunath Rao’s orders, Kedarji was summoned by Raghunath Rao, as a last resort to detach him from Mahadji. But Kedarji showed no desire to contest Mahadji’s position in the Shinde family thus settling the issue in favour of Mahadji.³

Madhav Rao probably provided the healing touch to the whole affair, as Mahadji’s position as Shinde family head was confirmed; widows of Mahadji’s slain brothers were granted villages for their maintenance and support. Bhagirathibai & Sagunabai Shinde were granted villages worth rupees 1, 22, 293 in yearly revenue in Inam for their support and for keeping up a body of 200 *sawars* for service with the Peshwa, these villages were granted from Shindes earlier assigned territory.⁴ Clothes of honour and jewelry were given by the Peshwa to Kedarji Shinde, Mahadji Shinde, Sakhubai Shinde wife of Jayappa Shinde.⁵

Madhavrao also appointed new officials to manage Shinde’s administration. Achutrao Ganesh was appointed *diwan* of the *daulat* of Shinde family in place of Ramchandra Malhar. Earlier Achutrao Ganesh was serving with Naro Shankar⁶ In the year 1767 Ragho Ram, Ragho Malhar & Baji Narsi were appointed to serve as *Karbharis* under Mahadji Shinde.⁷ *Parganas* Dharangaum & Badhave were given to Mahadji Shinde in exchange for *pargana* Sindhkhed.⁸ Peshwa also directed Mahadji that Jaysingpura locality in Ujjain which belonged to Prithvi Singh of Jaipur to be continued to him.⁹

¹ Ibid., L.167/ p.152

² Ibid., L.168/ p.153

³ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol. 2, p.511

⁴ *SSRPD*, Vol.I, Peshwa Madhavrao I, L.169/153

⁵ Ibid., L.170/p.157

⁶ Ibid., L.162/ pp.146-148

⁷ Ibid., L.179/p.167

⁸ Ibid., L.187/p.174

⁹ Ibid., L.307/p.285

Monetary problems were also attended by the Peshwa's court as after the Battle of Panipat, Shindes were facing acute financial problems. Narhar Laxmanrao, a *mamlatdar* of Mahadji Shinde was directed to pay rupees 10,000 to Mahadji's mother Chimabai for her expenses.¹ Earlier in a letter dated 8 July 1767 Mahadji complained bitterly that his own mother Chimabai had no means of livelihood and that she had to contract heavy debts to sustain herself and knew not how to repay them.²

But Raghunath Rao kept up the pressure and in 1766-67, in continuation of his policy to promote Kedarji Shinde against Mahadji, directed Kedarji to proceed to Bundelkhand & to carry out the mission which Government had undertaken on behalf of Gumansing and Khumansing Bundele for the collection of rupees 6.25 lakhs. The money was to be recovered by Kedarji and he was to receive rupees 2 lakhs as a gift and rupees 3 lakhs as loan, remitting the rest to Government.³ But the very next year Mahadji's position improved. Kedarji Shinde's wife & her two female servants were sent to be imprisoned in fort Lohgad in 1767-68.⁴

Widows of the deceased brothers of Mahadji who had made the sacrifice for the Maratha cause were also provided villages to maintain themselves. Villages of the value of rupees 1,50,226 were assigned to Sakhubai Shinde wife of Jayappa Shinde for her maintenance & *sanads* to that effect were issued to her and to Kedarji Shinde and Mahadji Shinde.⁵

More healing touch was provided as Mahadji's position stabilized. In 1768 eight villages in Pargana Jitur were assigned to Tulajbai Shinde.⁶ In 1769 in recognition of the loyalty and faithful services of Jayappa Shinde, some villages were granted in *inam* to his widow Sakhubai Shinde.⁷ In 1769 a similar grant was made to Sagunabai, widow of Jotiba Shinde.⁸ Also in 1769, a similar grant was made to Bhagirathibai, widow of Dattaji Shinde⁹ Kedarji Shinde's wife, who had

¹ Ibid., L 171/p.160

² Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.2, p.511

³ *SSRPD*, Vol.I, Peshwa Madhavrao I, L.174/p.163

⁴ Ibid., L 178/p.167

⁵ Ibid., L.173/p.160

⁶ Ibid., L.183/p.171

⁷ Ibid., L.184/p.172

⁸ Ibid., L.185/p.173

⁹ Ibid., L.186/p.186

been imprisoned at fort Lohgad, was at Mahadji Shinde's request, ordered to be released and made over to him.¹

By supporting the widows of the slain brothers of Mahadji through grants of land, Peshwa tried to soothe their hurt sentiments by making them independent of Mahadji in future as well as honoured them for the contribution made by their husbands. These grants ended the widows' opposition to Mahadji in future.

The policy of appointing person of own choice as head of Shinde family by Raghunath Rao and Madhav Rao and the ongoing civil war between them definitely stalled Maratha progress in the North.² Added to this Malhar Rao Holkar's old age and recurring ill health till his death (26 May, 1766) made a vigorous policy in Rajasthan or Bundelkhand impossible. It was only after much time had passed that young Peshwa's advisers could recognize that Mahadji Sindhia was the coming man.³

However, Holkar family was still enjoying an upper hand over Shinde in the Peshwa's court. This is evident from an order issued from the Peshwa's court around this time which gave a greater share of tribute collected from Udaipur to Holkars than those to Shindes. The amount of tribute due from Sansthan Udaipur was rupees 30,30,2211; of this rupees 4,00,000 were remitted, and the remainder was ordered to be paid in instalments. Out of this rupees 5,00,000 were to be paid to Holkar and only rupees 3,00,000 to Shinde, which was rupees 2 lakhs less.⁴

Once the succession dispute was over Mahadji's rise was unopposed and fairly smooth and rapid too. It was more so after the death of Malhar Rao Holkar in 1766 who had so far led the Maratha sardars in Peshwa's expansions plans beyond the Narmada River. Due to death of his son Khanderao and grandson Malrao, absence of any male heir in Holkar family, Ahilyabai took over and managed her affairs with the help of Tukoji Holkar, Malhar's longtime partner. Later there was a rift between Ahilyabai and Tukoji. This dichotomy in the house of Holkars was in favour of Mahadji Shinde as he began to enjoy prime position among Maratha sardars serving the Peshwas in the North beyond the Narmada River.

¹ Ibid., L.182/p.171

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. 2, p.365

³ Ibid.

⁴ SSRPD, Vol. Peshwa Madhavrao I., L.292/p.266

Thus rise of Shinde and Holkar coincided with Maratha expansion beyond the Narmada River. The first generation of Shinde and Holkar families got lavish share in the Maratha conquests in Central India as *Saranjam* because Peshwa Bajirao had more faith in them than his old sardars. Heavy concentration of their allotted territories in Central India and continuation of their participation in Maratha campaigns in the North encouraged Shinde and Holkar to set up bases at Ujjain and Indore in 1730s. As Maratha hold over Malwa *suba* became permanent with the victory over Mughal forces in the battle of Bhopal in 1738, Shinde and Holkar started settling down in Central India and managed military operations in the forward areas from Ujjain and Indore.

As Balaji Bajirao concentrated more in the South, Shinde and Holkar had greater independence in the Maratha affairs in the North, Raghunathrao gradually lost control over Shinde and Holkar as they themselves started asserting their new found power in Central India. Loss of several members of Shinde family at Panipat and later Malhar Rao's death in 1766 brought another generation to power once Raghunath Rao's interference in the succession issues of both the families ended. Mahadji and Ahilyabai ushered Shinde and Holkar families in to a new era in Maratha Politics, with little control from Poona court.

Rise of Shinde and Holkar Families After the Battle of Panipat

After the Battle of Panipat Maratha progress under Shinde and Holkar can be divided into two distinct phases. First phase relates to the revival of Maratha power going up to the First Anglo-Maratha War which ended with the signing of the treaty of Salbai in 1783. The second phase spans Maratha supremacy in the North under Mahadji Shinde from 1784 to 1794.

Mahadji Shinde was the fifth son of Ranoji Shinde and was born in 1727 to his second wife Chimabai, probably a Rajput lady whom Ranoji met during his campaigns in the North. In the beginning of his career Mahadji along with his brother Duttaji Shinde was "generally employed to command the troops with the Peshwa, while Jayappa was deployed in the North."¹ Mahadji and Duttaji first came into notice in 1751, in the war against Sulabat Jung and the French.²

¹ Duff, James Grant, *History of the Mahrattas*, Delhi, 1963, Vol.2, p.96

² Ibid.,

Murder of Jayappa at Merta in Marwar probably brought Mahadji to North in 1755.¹ At Panipat Mahadji fought along with Jankoji Shinde son of his slain brother Jayappa while Duttaji was killed at Barari Ghat near Delhi in January, 1760, during the siege against Afghan forces led by Abdali. At Panipat Shinde family troops numbered 7000 as against 3000 of Holkars in the 45,000 strong Maratha army.² But as Shinde returned to Ujjain to recuperate from his wound in the leg inflicted by the Afghan soldier, he had hardly anything left of his family troops in 1761-62, as many of them lost their life in the battle field and the remaining slowly found the way to their homes to recover from the shocks of the starvation and the defeat during the campaigns in the North. It is said that after the Battle of Panipat, Peshwa Balaji Bajirao made Mahadji the head of Shinde family before his death on 23rd June 1761.³ Further enquiry is needed to confirm this fact.

After the Battle of Panipat Mahadji rebuilt Shinde's household administration and raised family troops afresh. Survivors of the Panipat war in Shinde's side Jiva Ballal Kerkar popularly known as Jiva Dada Bakshi and Ramchandrababa recruited people from Konkan region in Shinde's service.⁴ Among those who were brought to Shinde's service from Konkan were Bhim Rao Modi, Baloba Tatya Pagnis, Yesaji Vasudev Rege Aarvalikar, Shivba Nana, Antaji Raghunath Kawathankar, Yashwantrao Shivaji Wagle, Vyankaji Ramchandra Rege. "This work of selection of men was finalized by Jiva Ballal and Ragho Ram Page after full scrutiny."⁵ Others who formed the core of the Shinde household were the family members: Kedarji Shinde, Rawaloji Shinde, Anandrao Shinde, Ramaji Patil Jadhav. All these men along with the new recruits of the Shinde army marched to Ujjain along with Mahadji, Jiva Dada and Ragho Ram Page. When Mahadji Shinde became the head of the family, the count of cavalry force reached 16,000 and there were camp followers also besides this number.

In the beginning Shinde's state around Ujjain extended up to 60 *kos* from the headquarter.⁶ But after the defeat at Panipat Shinde lost control in outer areas

¹ Ibid.,

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.203

³ Rajadhyaksha, N V, op.cit., p.46

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p.47

to the local elites and these tracts were regained by Mahadji Shinde. Jiva Dada and Ragho Ram Page were two officials who helped Mahadji in the initial years after Panipat in regaining the control over recalcitrant elements within Shinde's domain in Malwa.¹

As things settled down after the Battle of Panipat recruitments of men to handle civil and military duties began, to fill the vacant posts due to the death and dislocation of the earlier cadre of the Shinde family. In Mahadji's set-up built after Panipat, Desastha Brahmins held majority of the posts in civil administration where as his army was placed under the charge of Shenvi Brahmans.² Desastha and Shenvi caste of Brahmans had no social relations as they were far removed from each other. They lived apart beyond the possibility of uniting and fraternizing. The leaders of the Desastha party were the three sons of Raghunath Malhar Kulkarni of Nigodi, known as Aba Chitnis, Krishnoba Chitnis and Gopal Bhau. Aba Chitnis was a civil administrator and financial manager of extraordinary capacity, Krishnoba also was a good secretary and accountant while Gopal Bhau was Mahadji's deputy in Hindustan and controlled the civil and military affairs of his absent master, but he acted more as a viceroy than as a commander in the field, though all the generals were subordinate to him.

Mahadji's army chiefs were all Shenvi Brahmans, Jivaji Kerkar, his son Narayan Jivaji, and first cousin Jagannath Ram Krishna (Jagu Bapu), Lakshman Anant Lad (popularly known as Lakhwa Dada) and Balaji Anant Pinge (Baloba Tatya Pagnis), the last being a minister in charge of army accounts and a patron of Lakhwa Dada. With them was associated another Shenvi Sadashiv Malhar Bavle' (*Bhau Bakshi*), nominally known as *diwan*, who acted as Shinde's foreign secretary in his dealings with the English. Hereditary succession became a practice in Shinde's service, as it was by now the case in the succession over the *saranjams* granted to Ranoji Shinde by Peshwa. Ranoji's eldest son Jayappa succeeded to his father's office (in 1745), thus all other offices were becoming hereditary too like that of Peshwa and his *sardars*.³ "This was an important factor not only in context of the rise of the Peshwa but with the rise of the Maratha Confederacy, of which

¹ Ibid.

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.143

³ Sinha, H N, *Rise of the Peshwas*, Allahabad, 1954, p.245

the basic principle was the combination of practically absolute power and hereditary succession.”¹

Shinde’s administrative and military set-up was stream lined after Mahadji took over, and his presence gave great stability to Desastha and Shenvi group that came to dominate the core of his bureaucracy till his life time. As long as Mahadji lived, his strong hand prevented these two caste groups from quarreling and the administration was run smoothly and with full efficiency. But immediately after his death, the balance was upset and a crisis precipitated in Shinde’s administration largely due to instigations from Nana Fadnavis. Aba Chitnis, Shinde’s chief minister courted Nana’s support against his Shenvi rivals.²

Shenvi officers served Mahadji with all the loyalty in the field and in the inner council. So long as Mahadji was alive due to presence of this core group of Shenvi and Desastha leaders along with his trusted man Rana Khan even the worse crisis in the battle field was overcome with great cooperation among these men. This is evident from many incidence during the Lalsot Campaign and later battles where Mahadji emerged victorious after facing serious threats from his opponents as well as daily wrangling among his sardars over payment for the soldiers that he managed on day to day basis taking into consideration his other practical problems that severe monetary crisis was creating for him through out this period. He was given full support from this core group through out the period.

Some idea about Shinde’s core administrative and military structure soon after taking over as the head of the family can be derived on the basis of V N Rajyadhyaksha’s and J N Sarkar’s work in form of the various departments and the functionaries holding the highest post therein. Jiva Dada was Shinde’s Senapati - commander of all his forces, he handled Shinde’s affairs when Mahadji was out on a campaign as his *Mukhtiar*. Ragho Ram Page was Shinde’s Nayab Bakshi who handled all affairs in Shinde’s court and was senior most in Shinde’s cabinet of ministers. Ragho Ram Page didn’t serve long. Balaji Anant Pingre Baloba Tatya Pagnis was Shinde’s *Karbhari* a typical Maratha designation for the person who handled the work of a *Diwan*. Both designations were used for one who handled all financial matters of state. Baloba in the beginning was head revenue collector

¹ Ibid., p.245

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, pp.143-144

(*Mukhya Amaldar*), and then he was made the *Phadnis*. But later seeing his merit he was appointed *diwan*. He handled all matters of state related to another state. Sarkar refers him as a minister in charge of army accounts in the later phases of Mahadji's set-up in Hindustan.¹ He was a patron of Lakhwa Dada.²

Sadashiv Malhar Bable, a Shenvi, handled all works of *Phadnis*, *Daftardar* and all works related to another state nominally called as *diwan* (also *bhau diwan*) and popularly known as *Bhau Bhakshi*.³ Later he acted as Shinde's foreign secretary in his dealings with English.⁴ He was a distinguished civilian officer of Shinde.⁵

Another Shenvi Lakshman Anant Lad, popularly known as Lakhwa Dada handled all works related to supplies of arms and ammunition - production of artillery, gun powder, and other military supplies. Later as *Killedar* he was placed at Agra fort to look after all military supplies to Mahadji Shinde's army. Earlier he was *karkun* in the office of Baloba Tatya, when the latter was serving as Pagnis/Phadnis. When Baloba became Diwan he was promoted to the post of Pagnis and after that he was made *Killedar*. He became famous as *killedar* of Agra fort in the 1780s and 1790s.

Bhim Rao Modi was in charge of *Modikhana*. Peshwa had appointed him on this post and later issued him the letter assigning him the post of *Modi*. After him Sabaji Modi and then Bajiba Modi handled this work, whether they were from the same family remains to be enquired.⁶ Bhim Rao Modi and his successors also looked after the *Filkhana*, the department raising and maintaining elephants for Shinde's army.⁷

Narayan Jivaji or Narayanrao Bakshi son of Jivaji Ballal popularly known as Narba handled the work of military accounts including enrollment of soldiers and payment of their salary. But he was injured in the battle and later looked after the affairs in Shinde's court. Later the work of military accounts was handled by Jiva Dada's close friend Balajiram Kerkar or Balabhau Bakshi.

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.143

² Ibid.

³ Rajadhyaksha, op.cit., p.48; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.143

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.143

⁵ Rajadhyaksha, op. cit., p.48

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Shinde family's estates or *khasgi* were managed by Balwantrao Mahadev Shirodkar and he was known as *khasgiwale*. The affairs of the harem- *janankhana* was looked after by Shrigondya, a Desasth Brahmin. Post of *Sar-Subha* (deputy governor) was allocated to look after the management of Shinde's directly controlled territory far away from their Central India possessions. Shivaji Nana was Ajmer's *sar-subha*, he was a friend of Jiva Dada. Vishram Narhar Kerkar, again a Shenvi was *sar-subha* of Jawad district (*prant*) near Rampura in Malwa, Ambaji Ingle was the *sar-Subha* of Mewad prant.¹ The post of *Subha(e)* was held by Yashwant Varde, Sadashiv Narayan, Balappa Anna, Ramchandra Gangadhar, more information needs to be gathered about these men to know fully about their role in Shinde's set-up. Among those holding the post of *Mamlatdar* were Krishnoba Bhau Kalelkar, Lakshman Narayan Wagle, Sadashiv Vasudev and had managed their *mamlats* for a long period with great efficiency.²

Sadashiv Ramchandra Sukhthanekar son of Ramchandra Baba was Shinde's *vakil* or agent at the Peshwa's court and Naro Shivdev was the *naib-deputy* where as Ramji Patil was Peshwa's *vakil* in Shinde's court. Shinde had his *vakils* posted in the court of important rulers. Ramrao Sadashiv was Shinde's *vakil* at Jodhpur court³ and Madhavrao Tatya Rangnekar at Bharatpur court.⁴

Shinde's intervention in the Raghunathrao's fight against the Gohad Jats was first important event in his career after Panipat. As succession issue was settled in his favour, Mahadji⁵ was asked to lend support to Raghunathrao in his fight against the Gohad Jat.

Malhar Rao Holkar's support to Raghunathrao in the campaign against Gohad Jats was cut short due to his deteriorating health. He could have been of great help since he had made lot of ground work by assembling a fine park of artillery in the region with the help of his daughter- in- law Ahilyabai⁶ who looked

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, (translation of Marathi newsletters of Krishnaji Jagannath, Peshwa's *vakil* at Jodhpur court, originally compiled by D B Parasnis and published in *Itihas Sangraha*, 1914-1915), *Parampara*, Vol.93-94, 1990, L.2/p.20-21; Rajadhyaksha, op. cit., p.49;

⁴ Rajadhyaksha, N V, *op. cit.*, p.49;

⁵ Whether by this time succession issue was fully settled in favour of Mahadji needs to be confirmed

⁶ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.212, 216, 219, 220, 226, 227

after the workshop near Gwalior. Malhar made necessary preparations take on the might of the Gohad Jats. In the recent past Holkar chief with his body of Marathas had made inroads in the *Doab* region before he was defeated by Company forces¹ putting a check on his campaigns in the plains of Ganga and Yamuna. Malhar Rao seemed to be making up for his lapses at Panipat. In a letter written on 4th March 1765 he instructed Ahilyabai who was at Gwalior to manufacture cannon-balls in great number as he wrote her, “campaign against Gohad Jats was intended in the near future”.² Malhar too was aiming to capture the mud fort at Gohad and other impregnable forts in the region with the help of his artillery, and had spent lot of time modernizing his artillery at Gwalior.³ But he couldn’t do much since he was not enjoying very good health and also due to his old age. He joined Raghunathrao in March 1766.⁴ But Rana Chattr Singh of Gohad proved stronger as he was supported by Trans -Chambal Jats of Bharatpur.⁵ Meanwhile Malhar Rao Holkar’s health deteriorated badly forcing him to move out from Gohad siege along with his artillery and march towards Jhanshi, a safe Maratha base, in April 1766⁶ he died in May 1766.

With trouble all around Raghunathrao was in a helpless condition. The siege of Gohad was full of difficulties. His supplies were looted. His troops starved. He had no money with him to pay the troops. He asked Male Rao to collect and supply him with funds but Malerao explained his inabilities as he himself was facing problem in maintaining his troops.⁷ Both Ahilyabai and Malerao were back to Indore after Malhar’s demise and seem to have incurred lot of debt in the campaign in North Malwa and Bundelkhand.⁸

Kota *vakil* Gulgule was also present with Raghunathrao as Marathas were trying to siege Gohad with field guns as reported by Gulgule to Mahadji Shinde in

¹ *Foreign Department Record*, National Archive of India (henceforth NAI), New Delhi, SC 65 (130); John Camac’s report to Select Committee

² *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.226/4-3-1765

³ *Ibid.*, No.212,216,219,220, 226, 227

⁴ *Ibid.*, No.251/21-3-1766

⁵ *SPD*, (New Series), Vol.3, Introduction, p.9

⁶ *Ibid.*, No.88/8-4-1766

⁷ *Ibid.*, Introduction, p.9 & No.98

⁸ *Ibid.*

September 1766.¹ As siege continued without much success, Gulgule made requests to Mahadji to come to Gohad with two-three thousand force to help the Maratha cause.² Finally the situation was saved by the mediation of Mahadji Shinde who arranged a truce with the Rana on the 2nd January 1767. The Rana agreed to pay a fine of rupees 15 lakhs and the siege was raised.³

Finally Raghunathrao quit the Central India scene in June 1766 without fulfilling the expectations of Maratha officers present in the region to see Maratha power restored. He was facing financial problems, his forces were on the point of revolt for non payment of salary and he was compelled to return via Sendhwa pass.⁴

With Raghunathrao back to Poona and house of Holkar suffering another loss in the death of Malerao Holkar in March, 1767⁵ Maratha power in Malwa and Bundelkhand was in precarious situation. Maratha forces in North Malwa and Bundelkhand now faced an uphill task without their veteran leaders. Vishwas Rao Laxman and other lesser known sardars of Peshwa defended their position in worst situations ever since Panipat and faced evacuations from many *thanas*- outposts as Jats ran amuck in the region. Gujars and Ahirs in the Ahirwada region also combined with the Jats in the Bhind - Gwalior - Jhanshi region making Maratha forces run from their outposts to safer places. Only few Maratha sardars could retain their position as even Bundelas turned hostile in their own backyards. Maratha sardars and their forces were ill equipped to face the Jats forces who had even hired the services of foreign mercenaries like Madec and Walter Reinhardt. There was virtually no support from Peshwa to Maratha forces around this time, with the Peshwa's army wiped out in the Panipat war and coffers empty, Maratha sardars had hired local elements from the region, driven by adverse conditions they tried to manage on their own, situation was similar to those in the period of Rajaram's war against Aurangzeb. Peshwa's support to the Maratha cause in Malwa and Bundelkhand was very late to come by. It was only after Malhar's

¹ *Gulgule Daftar*(typescript), Vol.2(1762-1771), Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Shri Raghubir Library, Sitamau, No.59/30-8-1766 & No.60/1-9-1766

² *Gulgule Daftar*, Vol.2, No.63/ 6-10-1766

³ *SPD*, Vol.29, L 160; See also *SPD* (New Series), Vol. 3, Introduction, p.9

⁴ *SPD* (New Series), Vol.3, No.110

⁵ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.8

demise, Raghunathrao's failure and severe defeats in Bundelkhand areas that Peshwa decided to dispatch Maratha forces from South.

As per English sources Tukoji and Mahadji's march was ordered in mid 1767 and they were to start after Dussehra in 1767. That they were in the North at the time of Madho Singh's war against Jawahar Singh Jat in July 1768 confirms their presence in the North by this time. Peshwa's own forces marched later as Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna were given cash and also hundi worth fifty thousand rupees for equipping their forces for the Northern campaign in early 1769.¹ Tukoji and Mahadji were also asked to join them in the North with their family troops.²

Thus stage was set for the rise of Mahadji Shinde in Maratha Politics. Mahadji free from succession issue in his family now applied himself in the Maratha & North Indian Politics as he arrived at Karauli to join Ramchandra Ganesh and Viasji Krishna in the campaign against Jats.

But before Mahadji joined Peshwa's forces in the North, his engagements along with Ratan Singh of Udaipur against Maharana Arsi Singh and Zalim Singh of Kota in 1769 on the banks of Shipra near Ujjain has been contested by historians. In the ongoing contest for Udaipur throne, Mahadji's presence in the Battle of Shipra also narrated by Tod & other local historians on basis of Rajput literature doesn't find support in historical records.³ According to local Rajput account, "Mahadji's forces were driven back to the gates of Ujjain by Rajputs of Udaipur led by Maharana Arsi Singh. Later they managed a comeback and drove away Maharana's forces with heavy loss and Zalim Singh was taken prisoner. Shinde's military officer Ambaji Ingle got him released on payment of 60,000 rupees." Sarkar says, "This story finds no support in recorded history, and from the distance between Ujjain and Udaipur seems to me to be incredible." However, some historians have followed Tod and quoted this event in their works.⁴ Documents in *Gulgule Daftar* also don't indicate any related development taking place in Ujjain in the year 1769 to support it.

¹ SPD (New Series), Vol.3, No.174

² Ibid., No.170

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.371

⁴ Shastri, R P, *Jhala Zalim Singh (1730-1830)*, Jaipur, 1971, pp.56-58, Payne, C H, *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan, The Annals of Marwar*, Delhi, 1960

In May 1769, Mahadji Shinde presence in Udaipur to back the cause of Ratan Singh, the pretender in the succession dispute is however true.¹ But soon after Mahadji switched side on inducement from Maharana through Yashwant Rao Bable, Maharana offered more money to him. Tukoji who followed Mahadji later with only 2000 troops, leaving rest of the army behind, made a hasty retreat as Mahadji played the delaying tactics something that Malharrao Holkar used to play with Ranoji in the 1730s. Tukoji left Udaipur in disgust to his base at Kota on 2nd June 1769.² The Udaipur dispute was settled towards the end of July, Ari Singh agreeing to pay rupees 64 lakhs and also to provide Mahadji land worth rupees 5 lakhs. Jawad, Jiran, Nimach and Morwan areas were made over to the Marathas. At the end of September 1769, Mahadji marched away from Udaipur and joined Tukoji in the siege of Raghogarh in Khichiwada.³ This was probably first major independent military campaign undertaken by Mahadji against any powerful local elite outside his base in Malwa.

Soon after Mahadji joined Maratha forces in the North he had differences with the commander of Maratha forces Ramchandra Ganesh and marched towards Marwar, but he was mollified and joined the Peshwa's forces at Karauli.⁴ Later victories against Jat forces were combined with growing weakness of Jat power in the region as Jawahar Singh's defeat at the hands of Jaipur forces and his death subsequently led to domestic problems over the leadership issue. But at the same time Maratha leadership itself got divided over their strategies to be adopted against other powers in the *Doab* region, Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna differed over strategies to be applied in the North, Ramchandra was the commander of the Maratha forces and Visaji was his *diwan* and *Biniwala* (quarter master). Maratha chiefs disagreed on the mode and terms of the peace to be concluded between them and Hafiz Rahmat Khan and the Rohillas.⁵ Visaji Krishan and Mahadji Shinde were on one side; they separated from Ram Chandra Ganesh and marched towards Etawah as the differences grew in 1771.⁶

¹ *Foreign Department Records*, NAI, SCIO 69 (153)

² Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, pp.371-372; *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SCIO 1769 (153)

³ *SPD*, Vol.29, 87, 233-245

⁴ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, New Delhi, 1973, p.10

⁵ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1771(83, 86, 90, 112, 332); SC 1771(86, 90)

⁶ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1771(83, 86, 90, 112, 332)

Differences between Mahadji and Tukoji Holkar also came to the fore very soon. Growing disunity in the Maratha Central leadership allowed Mahadji to play his own cards in the local politics, House of Shinde was opposed to Rohillas led by Najib from the days they had defeated Duttaji Shinde in 1759 and now Mahadji started working to destroy them but Tukoji supported Najib¹ Mahadji Shinde was jealous of Tukoji Holkar's transaction with Najib-ud-Daulah.² It was a tit for tat situation as Shindes supported the Jats, Holkar's enemy, Malhar's son Khanderao Holkar had been killed by the Jats at Kumbher in 1754.³ Shinde during the course of the campaign wanted a prompt negotiation with the Jats after Maratha victory by accepting moderate money indemnity and march ahead to tackle Rohillas in the Doab as they according to him were Marathas main enemy in the North. Ramchandra Ganesh had a different strategy as he wanted to charge heavily from the Jats and wrest their possessions in the Doab with the help of Rohilla chief Najib-ud-Daula.⁴ Tukoji Holkar was the rival of Shinde and Najib took advantage of this as his Hindu agents visited him and bribed his ministers and induced them to persuade Tukoji to back Najib in the inner council of Maratha leaders as Malhar had done in the past.

Peshwa also approved Ramchandra Ganesh's plan and the Maratha army entered *Doab* much against Shinde's strategy and they were completely deceived by Najib - ud - Daulah who turned his back on the Marathas by refusing to vacate the earlier held Maratha outposts that had been taken over by them after the defeat in the Battle of Panipat.⁵ This act vindicated Mahadji Shinde's opinions and strategy against Najib -ud-Daulah. Shinde - Holkar rivalry thus got entwined with differences between Ramchandra and Visaji as they took sides in the rivalry between Mahadji and Tukoji ruining the Maratha cause in the North. As Visaji supported Mahadji his opponent Ramchandra was bound to support Mahadji's rival Tukoji. Mahadji exploited this situation with his own intrigues against these two leaders sent by the Peshwa⁶ as English reports claimed, "...*Visaji has been*

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, pp-10-12

² *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 26 May 1770(315-16)

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.11

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p.12

⁶ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1771(248)

fortifying his encampment lest Ramchandra Ganesh since his increase of power should attack him. This charge has been brought about by the intrigues of Shinde.”

Visaji Krishna assumed the command of Maratha forces in North India as Madhav Rao confirmed Visaji in the sole command of Peshwa's forces in the North and directed Ramchandra to repair to Poona. Peshwa sent his agent Lakshman Pandit to North with the orders and to see to it that it was executed. But a party reportedly was formed by Shinde and Tukoji to keep Ramchandra in the command notwithstanding the orders from the Deccan and the attempts of Visaji who it seems was determined to quit Hindustan if the orders of Madhav Rao were not carried into execution.¹

Later English reports claimed even Visaji Krishna having differences with Mahadji & Tukoji,² Visaji resented Mahadji Shinde's attack on Zabita Khan³

Mahadji during this period of great political turmoil and realignment of regional and local forces in the North got introduced to his Northern counterparts - Rajputs of Udaipur, Zalim Singh of Kota, Jats, Rohillas, Shuja-ud-Daulah and English. His counterpart Tukoji's presence in the North at the same time allowed him to measure his rival's strength and weaknesses. Though Tukoji presence in North was not so significant in future as Holkar military chief was to shuttle his duties as part of Peshwa's army in South and the Holkar family's exigencies in Central and North India as per the wishes of Ahilyabai. Moreover, Ahilyabai and Tukoji later developed differences which they couldn't sort out, weakening Holkar's cause in the North for ever in absence of an able leader.

Gosains chief Umrao Giri & Himmat Bahadur two sardars in the service of Awadh Nawab, promoted friendly relations between Mahadji Shinde and Shuja-ud-Daulah. Umrao Giri, Gosain visited Maratha camp in 1770.⁴ English agents reported Mahadji's journey towards Faizabad “to keep up the (appearance of) friendship with Shujah -ud-Daulah with whom he had always been on more amicable terms than any of the other chiefs” mainly due to the diplomacy of the

¹ *Foreign Department Record, NAI, SC 1771(272, 276-77)*

² *Foreign Department Record, NAI, SC 1771(279)*

³ *Foreign Department Record, NAI, SC 1771(333)*

⁴ *Foreign Department Record, NAI, SC 1770 (567, 684-85, 705-06, 724, 727-28); SC 1770 (768)*

Gosains Umraogiri & Himmat Bahadur. ¹More important event from Maratha point of view was Mahadji escorting Mughal emperor Shah Alam II to Delhi in 1772 from his exile at Allahabad after a gap of eleven years.² Mahadji Shinde sent a secret letter to him professing loyalty to Emperor and offering to escort him to Delhi.³ and Shah Alam responded positively. First Mahadji marched to Delhi from Farrukhabad in January 1771 to establish Maratha power over Delhi, along with Visaji Krishna.⁴ Shah Alam's agent Saifuddin Mohammad also followed Mahadji and helped him by fording the Yamuna and creating the right atmosphere by taking the citizens of Delhi into confidence before Maratha forces entered the Delhi Fort through the Delhi Gate.⁵ 5000 strong Maratha contingent occupied the city of Delhi by expelling Zabita Khan's garrison.⁶ Shinde's officer Bala Rao Govind was placed with the forces to control the city. Shinde took over the administration along with Visaji Krishna as collector of the districts round Delhi. Shinde and Visaji became all in all controlling the Prince and Queen Mother at the Delhi Court.

Shinde on 12th March 1771 opened negotiations with the Emperor Shah Alam for bringing him back to Delhi at the head of a Maratha force and restoring the fort to his officers in return for rupees 25 lakhs as expense. Cession of Mirat and some other districts were also demanded. Shinde also sought the right to appoint all imperial officials below the *vazir* and take half the *nazar* paid by the newly appointed functionaries. On receiving first instalment Shinde delivered possession of the fort to Shah Alam's representative on 2nd August 1771. Emperor left Allahabad for Delhi later in August and was on the way to Farrukhabad ⁷ but he had to call Mahadji with all his forces to escort him as trouble erupted when

¹ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1772-73(15-16)

² *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1765 (289-290, 308) It is mentioned in this document that Malhar Rao Holkar in 1765 also planned to escort the Mughal Emperor but the plan didn't materialize, as an English agent reported, "Shah Alam's was negotiating for a treaty with Malhar Rao Holkar- the emperor was to be protected on condition of his ceding the territory of Allahabad and Korah. Malhar Rao Holkar promised Shah Alam of escorting him to Delhi."

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.20

⁴ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1771(86, 90)

⁵ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. 3, p.21

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1771(333)

Emperor demanded tribute from Bangash Pathans.¹ Seeing Mahadji advancing with his forces, Bangash forces made peace and Mahadji went back. On 18th November Mahadji finally received Emperor at Nabiganj after crossing over Kali Sind River² and escorted him to Delhi which the Emperor entered on 6th January 1772.³ It was a historic day in the life of Mahadji Shinde and must have been noticed by all the powerful groups in the North as well as by Peshwa and other Maratha leaders at Poona court. English officials too reported this event to their higher authorities at Calcutta.

Maratha position in the Mughal court got strengthened as they were instrumental in defeating Najib's Rohilla forces and the Jats of Bharatpur.

Jats had troubled Marathas after Panipat by driving them away from North Malwa and Bundelkhand areas. Jats military power and financial position was strongest in the Delhi Agra region and they were now trying to expand their territory after Maratha defeat at Panipat. Jat military forces had added European mercenaries to their ranks too. In 1765 Walter Reinhardt with a well drilled contingent of men left the service of Madho Singh of Jaipur to join Jawahar Singh Jat.⁴ French mercenary Rene Madec also joined Jat forces a few years later.⁵ "Jawahar Singh in November 1767 dreamt of building up a coalition with all the Rajput states and expelling the Marathas from Rajputana and even Malwa."⁶ From the middle of 1767 to the quarter of 1769, Jat forces had been busy driving out Maratha posts in Bundelkhand and North Malwa in concert with the indigenous Rajput chiefs of the region and the Jat ruler of Gohad. Maratha leadership and their local agents in Bundelkhand and North Malwa were faced with an uphill task trying to hold their own as Ratan Singh led the Jat forces against the Marathas.⁷

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. 3, p.22

² *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, SC 1772-73(15-16)

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.22

⁴ Smith, L F, *A Sketch of the Rise Progress and Termination of the Regular Corps Formed and Commanded by the Europeans*, 1803-1804, typescript Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, p.3 L F Smith's information on Walter Reinhardt differ from Sarkar when he says that Walter Reinhardt formed two battalions, first in 1772, See Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. 2, p.367;

⁵ Ibid., pp.367-68

⁶ Ibid., p.368

⁷ Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol 3, p.2

These troubles ceased only with the murder of Ratan Singh and the ensuing civil war. This gave the Marathas their long-coveted chance.¹

Tukoji and Mahadji Shinde joined Peshwa's generals by the end of 1769, they entered Jaipur by way of Karauli in January 1770. By this time Jat power had weakened due to death of Jawahar Singh and domestic problems of succession to Jat leadership. Maratha forces led by Ramchandra Ganesh were defeated by the Jats in the battle of Sonkh-Aring on April 6, 1770. Another powerful local force of the North was that of the Rohillas in the Doab region led by Najib-ud-Daula. It was Mahadji who showed clear vision when Najib played with other Maratha chiefs misguiding and setting them up against each other.² After the exit of Najib in 1770, joint Marathas forces made rapid progress in revival of Maratha power in the North. North India position was getting better for the Marathas as some powerful leaders passed away in quick succession, first it was Madho Singh of Jaipur (1768), then Jawahar Singh Jat of Bharatpur (August 1768) and now Najib in 1770. By this time Marathas were in calm waters, particularly in the politics of the North.

But differences between Shinde and Holkar again emerged after Najib's death as Viasji with the support of Mahadji demanded 25 lakhs rupees for succession of Zabita Khan but Holkar backed Zabita assuring him to get acknowledged without paying any money.³ Tukoji who sheltered Zabita was sent an ultimatum as Zabita rejected Viasji's demand. Both Shinde and Holkar ran into each other again while Ahmad Khan Bangash and Hafiz Rahmat Khan wanted Maratha to back them, Bangash for the post of Mir Bakshi. Tukoji's attempt to scuttle the settlement was over-ruled as Bangash paid rupees 10 lakhs and Hafiz Rahmat rupees 22 lakhs for Maratha patronage.⁴

Ramchandra Ganesh, the nominal head of the Marathas in Hindustan was so disappointed with the ongoing intrigues by Shinde and Holkar that in January 1771 he decided to march back to the Deccan. The failure of Maratha war and policy in the Doab in 1770 proved that Holkar's policy endorsed by Ramchandra Ganesh of alliance with Najib was a mistake and that Mahadji Shinde who had

¹ Ibid., p.6

² Ibid., p.16

³ Ibid., p.18

⁴ Ibid., p.19

advocated the opposite policy had truer political vision.¹ Tukoji and Ramchandra were utterly discredited in the eyes of their colleagues and master. Shinde's counsels henceforth triumphed and in close concert with Visaji, he took charge of the guidance of Maratha affairs, their triumph in capturing Delhi in Feb 1771 confirmed Visaji's promotion by Peshwa and Ramchandra was recalled. Ejection of Zabita Khan, check on Tukoji's and now order to recall Ramchandra by Peshwa gave a new vigour to Maratha policy in the north from the beginning of 1771.²

A little drama in the Maratha leadership was enacted. Visaji was accused by Ramchandra for disrespect shown to him as he started to march south with his household cavalry. Shinde and Holkar now joined hands and crossed over to Ramchandra's side. Visaji abandoned Maratha ranks holding Delhi fort in opposition to Shinde-Holkar's alliance with Ramchandra. Ultimately it was Visaji who was asked by Peshwa to head Maratha forces. Ramchandra left Delhi for Deccan in September 1771.³ Visaji Krishna now became the head of the Maratha forces in Hindustan without any rival. But he was too weak to enforce obedience from Shinde and Holkar or to unite them for Maratha cause. Henceforth Maratha Policy in the North parted into two irreconcilable paths, Shinde and Holkar each took his own line regardless of the other, and no joint enterprise was possible. Shinde came closer to Emperor by his individual machinations as Holkar antagonized Shah Alam by joining hands with Zabita Khan. Visaji remained in the North till Naryanrao's murder led to a shift to the south of all important Maratha leaders including Shinde and Holkar for the next ten years.

There is further confirmation in 1772 of Mahadji's growing military strength; he had 14,100 horse and foot soldiers as against 30,400 with Tukoji Holkar and 24,325 under the command of Visaji Pandit. Total Maratha forces of Ramchandra and Visaji along with those of Shinde and Holkar campaigning in the North counted to 68,825.⁴ Certainly Marathas were back in action as 11 years back whole Maratha army was in shambles after the Battle of Panipat.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p.20

³ It is important to narrate these incidents to get a hold over the vast mass of Marathi and other language documents and correlate the developments related to Shinde and Holkar in the North

⁴ *Foreign Department Record, NAI, SC 1772-73(79)*

Mahadji Shinde's Rise during the First Anglo-Maratha War

Mahadji's position soared in the North Indian politics as he escorted the Mughal Emperor back to Delhi on 6th January, 1772. He was also noticed by the English agents in Awadh and Allahabad. In these years of campaigns in the North under Peshwa's generals Ranchandra Ganesh and Visaji, Shinde displayed greater political maturity and tactfulness than the other Maratha leaders, in the campaign against the Jats, Rohillas and Afghans. And successful escorting the Mughal Emperor back to Delhi was the icing on the cake, Mahadji announcing his arrival in the North Indian politics.

Crisis created by the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao in 1773 and the ensuing Anglo-Maratha War further allowed Mahadji to train himself as an able commander of Maratha forces in the battle fields of Western and Central India under Nana Phadnis, now managing the Maratha affairs of the Peshwas. During the Anglo-Maratha War first in Western India and later in Central India Mahadji showed his military prowess by marshalling Maratha forces that made English forces to retreat from both Western and Eastern sectors of warfare without any success. Unable to make any headway either into Maratha heartland of Poona from the West coast or into Shinde's domain in Malwa from Allahabad - Bundelkhand side, English were forced to sign Treaty of Salbai in 1782. Again it was Mahadji whom Nana Phadnis authorized to negotiate the terms of treaty with the English without any interference from the Poona court.

Another factor that raised Mahadji's position in the Poona court and in the minds of the people of Maharashtra was his success in making Raghunath Rao surrender despite British protection and support behind him, during the period of Anglo-Maratha War. Raghunath Rao, the murderer of Narayanrao had sought refuge with English forces as Poona court went after him.¹

Mahadji was also involved in the capture of another traitor, the Pretender, a person who was posing himself to be Sadashiv Rao Bhau brother of Peshwa Baji Rao who was slain in the Battle of Panipat. Mahadji Shinde and Bhivrao Panse were dispatched to track the pretender, who was trying to reach Bombay via Kolaba and Pen. Raghuji Angre succeeded in securing him early in November,

¹ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.3, pp. Sardesai says, "This event was certainly a great occasion for Mahadji as Raghunath Rao was then a villain all over the Maratha country for his role in the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao and now Mahadji had made him surrender

1776 and delivered him to Mahadji Shinde who had arrived then at Kolaba. Mahadji brought the pretender under strict guard to Poona by the route of Talegaum. Later he was executed on 18th December, 1776.¹

During the Anglo-Maratha War Mahadji complemented Nana Phadnis' role as administrator and organizer of Maratha forces by acting as his military general advising Nana how to deploy his forces and by leading the forces on the both Western and Eastern frontiers during the war. British forces' plan to take over Poona in Nov.1778-Jan. 1779 from Bomaby side were foiled by Mahadji Shinde and Nana Phadnis who were then acting in unison against the advancing British forces and cornered them from all sides near Wadgaon. British troops finding no way of return were entrapped and starved. Finally forced to the negotiating table the English signed the Treaty of Wadgaon. It was Mahadji who actually guided the Maratha forces in countering the British forces in the Western Ghats.² Another tactful act of Mahadji was that he made surrender of Raghunath Rao a precondition for signing of the Treaty of Wadgaon. Thus the English forces could no more protect Raghunath Rao and he had to surrender before Mahadji.³ Thus his successful leadership during the three years fighting against the English forces gave Mahadji a predominant voice and position in the Maratha government.⁴

While Mahadji's accomplishments in Western sector during the Anglo-Maratha War saved British onslaught on Poona he later in the course of the 7 year long war gave formidable challenge to English forces in his own backyard. English forces were trapped by Shinde's forces as they tried to enter Maratha bases in Malwa making their grounds from Allahabad and neighbouring Bundelkhand territory.

Mixed feelings for the Marathas among the locally powerful groups in Bundelkhand and North Malwa and backing of many among them to the English made last phase of Anglo-Maratha war an acid test for Mahadji Shinde. English forces trying to make way into Malwa region, had great advantage as Rana of Gohad was on their side. Mahadji too received considerable local support in his

¹ Ibid., p.60

² Ibid., pp.80-82

³ Ibid., pp.80-82

⁴ Ibid., p.84

fight against the English forces. Chanderi chief, Umraogiri Gosain, Kota chief Zalim Singh extended support to Mahadji Shinde in his fight against the English forces. Support also came from Ahilyabai Holkar, she dispatched whatever troops she could arrange locally from her area under Trimbakji Ingle.¹ Her own forces were deployed with Tukoji in the Western sector. Mahadji's request for support to Peshwa also received a positive response. But Bhopal ruler was not in Mahadji's side even though he was a tributary of Marathas, his support wavered, he was inclined towards the English too.²

Malwa region was the second Maratha stronghold after Maharashtra. Unsuccessful in their attempt to take over Poona from the West, the English forces now planned a march to reach the Maratha capital from East through Malwa. Losing it to English would have meant direct threat to Maratha seat of power. It was again Mahadji who planned how English forces were to be checked both in the west and in the east. Nana advised Mahadji to be in Khandesh between Burhanpur and Kondai Pass but Mahadji stayed in Malwa much against the wishes of Nana. Mahadji believed that he could protect Poona only from Malwa by preventing fresh British troops from pouring through that province into Deccan. If Malwa was lost, he urged, the Maratha State would come to an end.³ Mahadji positioned himself in Malwa and he asked Nana Farnavis to guard Konkan and Gujarat with the help of southern Maratha chiefs, Tukoji Holkar was to guard Khandesh as English despatched troops through Bundelkhand and Malwa under Col Popham and later under Col Camac and Muir.⁴ Mahadji also advised Nana on how to defend Gujarat and also took advantage of his friendship with Govindrao Gaikwad whom he supplied with money and troops and dispatched him to Gujarat to take possession of Baroda. This was a diversion which largely upset Goddard's plans.⁵ Mahadji's strategy succeeded, while Goddard's forces were stopped near Khandala pass and forced to return to Bombay it was Mahadji's forces in Malwa that stopped the advancing British troops from Bengal side in Malwa region.

¹ *Maheshwar Darbarchi Batmi Patren*, D B Parasnis, Vol.1, Bombay, 1910, No.42/3-3-1781

² Ibid.

³ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.104

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Mahadji's defence against advancing British troops in Northern Malwa and Bundelkhand was in the face of great hardship and risk to his own life¹ and his forces due to extreme conditions both physical and financial. But then Mahadji was different from the rest of the Maratha sardars as he had his own ways to deal with difficult situations.

On this occasion Mahadji also advised Nana on how to marshal his forces to defend Western sector while he himself moved to defend Malwa. Shinde asked him to manage Gujarat and Konkan with the help of Southern Maratha chiefs and Khandesh by Tukoji Holkar. Shinde also took advantage of his friendship with Govindrao Gaikwad whom Fateh Singh Gaikwad had ousted; he supplied Govindrao with money and troops and dispatched him to Gujarat to take possession of Baroda from his adversary Fateh Singh Gaikwad.

After a long hesitation Nana accepted Mahadji's strategy. This was a diversion which largely upset Goddard's plans. Goddard's forces were stopped near Khandala pass and forced to return to Bombay and it was Mahadji's forces in Malwa that stopped the advancing British troops from Bengal side in Malwa region.

Contemporary Marathi and English correspondences provide graphic details of English attempt to enter Malwa and Shindes hard fought battles against them in trying conditions at different locations in North Malwa in 1780-81.

British were already active in the Awadh- Allahabad- Bundelkhand region and interfering in the affairs of the local chieftains of the region. Their growing proximity with the Awadh Nawab Shuja -ud- Daula was also a factor in their favour. Situation had changed as in 1770 Shuja-ud-Daula had tried to befriend Mahadji by sending Umraogiri Gosain to Shinde's camp during the Maratha campaigns against Jats and Rohillas. Thus local chieftains were neither loyal to the British nor to the Marathas but were forced to take sides to save their own position in the region. Shinde showed great resilience against British forces in adverse conditions, as he himself decided to oppose the British advance in to Bundelkhand

¹ Duff, J.G., *History of the Mahrattas*, Vol.2 pp.317-318, See how Mahadji was attacked by the English forces

and Malwa with whatever local support he could muster from Bundela chieftains and other influential elements in the region.¹

Ahilyabai could send only a small contingent as there was no money to muster a large contingent from Indore. Trimbak Ingle from Holkar side joined Shindes forces with a contingent of two thousand men.²

Kota chieftain Zalim Singh joined the battle scene in support of the Marathas. Mahadji Shinde's Kota wakil Lalaji Ballal Gulgule drew him up to help Maratha forces. Zalim Singh's contingent arrived sometime in March 1781 with 4000 men, 5000 auxiliaries, along with six field guns and 50 guns³ to join the military operations against the English forces.⁴

Gosain chief Umraogiri Gosain joined Shinde's side again due to political compulsions. Gosain chief had been visiting Shinde's court while in service with Shuja-ud-Daula in early 1770s and probably knew that his political career would soar in Mahadji's company.⁵ Chanderi chief also supported Mahadji forces. Raja of Chanderi was wounded while assisting Marathas against Lt Col Camac in April 1781.⁶

Due to the presence of the English forces in the region since an earlier period, the locally powerful and rich chieftains had been receiving constant luring from the British side. Raja Anirudh Singh, ruler of Panna was being approached since 1777. Panna chief possessed the famous diamond mines of Panna, a regular source of substantial revenue. But Anirudh Singh was not openly with either the British or the Marathas. He kept both sides guessing as local British agents reported Anirudh Singh's deceptive dealing with Col Leslie. This is clear from English records.

Anirudh Singh had disputes with local chiefs Guman Singh and Khuman Singh. In 1777, English had mediated between the two sides for settling the

¹ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.105

² *Maheshwar Darbarchi Batmi Patren*, Vol.1, No.42/3-3-1781

³ *Sutarnal-swivel gun*, Sen, S. N., *Military System of the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1979, p.255

⁴ *Historical Papers Relating to Mahadji Shinde*, G. S. Sardesai (ed), Gwalior, 1937, No.142/ 31st March 1781

⁵ Joshi, R M(ed), *Poona Akhbars*, Hyderabad, 1953, AR No. 65/15th July 1781

⁶ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 27 April 1781(14)

dispute.¹ Col Leslie's had protested harassment of troops under Capt Munro by this Bundela chieftain.² Still the British kept coaxing the Panna ruler to join their side. As late as 1778 British were trying to take Anirudh in to full confidence. Anirudh Singh was even warned by Col Leslie against intrigues of Balaji Pandit (Nana Phadnis) in 1778 in order to bring him to his side.³ But Anirudh Singh remained opposed to British and his minister Beni Hazari attempted to obstruct entry of Col Leslie's detachment through his territory in July 1778.⁴ In August 1778 Anirudh Singh did try to defend himself against the British forces by organising his own forces as reported by the British agent⁵ Finally in September 1778⁶ Anirudh Singh and Col Leslie's troops were engaged in a fight.⁷ Anirudh's dispute with his brother had made it possible for English to intervene⁸ and in October 1778 Anirudh Singh and Col Leslie's reached an agreement.

Some local chieftains allied with English forces out of political expediency of protecting their territories from the Marathas. Raja of Simthar, was one such case as he feared Maratha control over his territory, he gave in to the British pressure.⁹ Another such chief was Sumer Singh, *zamindar* of Tirawa, whose fort was taken over as he submitted to Col Leslie,¹⁰ the commander of British forces.

Interestingly English side even approached Mahadji Shinde's men through their local agents a few years before they opened the eastern front in the Anglo-Maratha War. In 1778 local British agent in the region Col Leslie approached Khanderao Hari Bhalerao for friendship with Mahadji Shinde, a fact that needs to be further confirmed. Shinde later did become inclined towards English after the Treaty of Salbai. But before that Mahadji trapped advancing English troops by engaging them in guerilla warfare.

¹ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 8 Sept 1777(9) d;

² *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 1778 (2246-47, 2257, 2313, 2316-17, 2321)

³ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 1778 (2246-47, 2328-32)

⁴ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 30 July 1778 (2)

⁵ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 31 Aug 1778 (3)

⁶ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 28 Sep 1778 (3)

⁷ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 28 Sep 1778 (3)

⁸ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 5 Oct 1778 (1)

⁹ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 15 May (15, C, D)

¹⁰ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI S 9 Feb 1778 (B)

Col Popham was sent with 2,500 men equipped with artillery to march into Malwa from Bundelkhand side.¹ British won over Rana of Gohad to their side providing them strategic gains as Rana was a powerful person in the Bhind - Gwalior region.² Marathas thus lost possession of the two strategic forts of Gwalior and Gohad³ which formed the basis of Mahadji's power in Malwa and Bundelkhand. When Mahadji formed his camp at Ujjain, Popham with Rana's help captured Gwalior on 4th August 1780 before Mahadji could make any move to save it. Mahadji's Maratha *sardar* Ambaji Ingle fought bravely but couldn't save the fort as one of Shinde's men was won over by to Goddard. Killedar Raghunath Ramchandra was killed later during the capture of the fort.

From Gwalior the British forces marched towards Mahadji's base further south via Antri & Sipri. Col Camac was dispatched to support another English contingent led by Popham. He crossed Yamuna at Kalpi and arrived 'straight at Sironj in Feb 1781 and threatened Bhilsa. Nabob of Bhopal, a Maratha tributary favoured the British.⁴ Mahadji dispatched Ambaji Ingle and Khanderao Hari(Appa Khanderao?) to oppose the advancing English and himself remained near Bhilsa to face Camac. Ambaji Ingle moved forward and met Lt. Col. Camac's detachment in Central India between 8 to 19 February 1781.⁵

Later Camac was engaged in guerilla warfare by Mahadji and driven back to a place called Mahadpur. Camac having replenished his supplies attacked Mahadji by surprise on 24th March 1781, delivering a serious blow to Maratha forces. Skirmish between Col. Camac and Mahadji Shinde at Achintpur were also reported by the British agents around this time in their dispatch of 2nd April.⁶ English forces (probably it was the reinforcements under Col. Muir) were spotted in the territory of Chanderi ruler by Maratha agents. In fact Raja of Chanderi was wounded while assisting Marathas against Lt Col Camac.⁷

¹ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.3, pp.109-110

² Rajadhyaksha, N. V., *op.cit.*, pp.354/L No.18/4-5-1783, Jiva Dada, Mahadji's military general wrote, ... गोहदवाल्या जाटाने ग्वालेर किल्ला इंग्रजाने देउन गेला

³ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.3, pp.109-110

⁴ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.110

⁵ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 8 Feb 1781(13,14)b & S 19 Feb, 1781(3-4)b

⁶ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 2 April, 1781(5)

⁷ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 27 April, 1781(14)

Reinforcements for the English comprised of twelve field guns, two elephants and few camels and their movement was badly hampered by the forest on the way.¹ Mahadji's position became precarious as these reinforcements reached Camac and Col. Muir on 4th April, 1781.

During the summer of 1781 while the Poona forces were beating Goddard back in Maharashtra region between Panvel and Kalyan, Mahadji was fighting stubbornly in Malwa.² Shinde kept up the pressure and bided his time till the advent of monsoon showing a clear foresight and understanding of local terrain, an experience gained from many years of military campaigns in this region. He knew that English could not move after rains in the local slushy terrain and marches would necessarily be suspended. Mahadji had a well equipped force of ten thousand men at his command.³ In addition to that his military officers Ambaji Ingle and *Bahu Bakshi* had their own forces also which were some where around five to seven thousand strong.⁴ But against the English resistance more troops were needed to prevent English forces from deeper penetration in the region.

During the summer of 1781, Mahadji was fighting stubbornly in Malwa.⁵ The English were being pressed back by the Shindes forces by the end of May 1781.⁶ A grim battle was reported near Sipri-Kolaras between the Shindes forces and the retreating English forces in June which intensified towards the end of the month.⁷ The English forces fighting against the Shinde's army had been lately reinforced.⁸ (June 1781) The Shinde's forces later cornered the English forces led by Captain Popham near Sipri- Kolaras.⁹ Having achieved an upper hand Shinde decided to stick to the commanding position of his forces till Dussehra.¹⁰ He

¹ *Historical Papers Relating to Mahadji Shinde*, G S Sardesai(ed), Gwalior, 1937, No.142/ 31st March, 1781

² Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.110

³ *Maheshwar Darbarchi Batmi Patren*, Vol.1, No.42

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Poona Akhbars*, Vol 1, AR No.57/29th June 1781; Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.3 p.110

⁶ Ibid. AR No. 51/9th June 1781

⁷ Ibid. AR No.52/ June 1781; AR No.57/29th June 1781; AR No.58/30th June 1781

⁸ Ibid. AR No.53/20th June 1781

⁹ Ibid. AR No.55/ June 1781

¹⁰ Ibid.

waited for the advent of monsoon when the hostilities would necessarily be suspended as movements became difficult.¹

Mahadji seem to have got support at this critical juncture from Poona court. Mahadji Shinde while active against the English near Sipri-Kolaras demanded a reinforcement of 10,000 troops from the *Karbhari* at the Poona court and also substantial help in money,² he sent a *mutisadi* asking the *karbhari* to recruit men and collect money and place these at his disposal so that he may restrain the activities of the English near Sipri-Kolaras.³

According to reports received from Shinde's camp around this time Shinde had 10 thousand Deccani force and 10-12 thousand troops had been pooled by the local elites supporting Marathas and Gosain and other ascetics elements (*Bairagis*) combined to make additional 7-8 thousand fighters, totaling roughly 28-30 thousand force.⁴

Poona court did respond to Shinde's requirements. For payment of money to Shinde the Karbharis directed Abaji Naik Wanavale, a banker, to advance money to Mahadji Shinde.⁵ A contingent did arrive from Poona under Balvantrao Dhondadev. Ahilyabai also sent him reinforcements & supplied grain from Indore.⁶ Now Mahadji with his improved position started a bold offensive, exerting himself night and day, without the usual comforts of food and rest. Shinde also started resorting to guerilla tactics now to thwart English forces near Sipri-Kolaras area.⁷

On first July he inflicted a severe defeat on Col Muir near Sipri and established his camp on what is known as Buddha - Pahad in the vicinity of Jhansi. Col Muir was encamped at Sipri with less than forty miles distance between the two. But with the approaching monsoon the roads leading to Sipri Kolaras turned

¹ Smith, L F, op.cit., p. 56, Smith's description of local terrain in Central India aptly fits what English were to face, "*This was in the rains, and in Khandesh on the northern side of the river Narmada and in a country where in the rains, the soil becomes knee deep with mud, through which guns can hardly be dragged a mile a day, which renders the junction of distant detachments on an emergency, scarcely practicable.*"

² *Poona Akhbars*, Vol.1 AR No.61/9th July 1781

³ *Ibid.*, Vol.1 AR No.61/9th July 1781; AR No.65/15th July 1781

⁴ *Maheshwar Darbarchi Batmi Patren*, Vol.1, L.58/15-7-1781

⁵ *Poona Akhbars*, Vol.1, AR No.61/9th July 1781

⁶ *Maheshwar Darbarchi Batmi Patren*, Vol.1, No.59/27-7-1781

⁷ *Poona Akhbars*, Vol.1, AR No. 71/ 21st July 1781

slushy by end of July 1781 on account of heavy rains making it difficult to obtain supplies.¹ Mahadji Shinde therefore started shifting his camp to Kale Bag *Sarai*.² Within a few days Mahadji had moved to a safer location Kale Bag.³

Fighting Once again intensified in the beginning of August and reports were received at Poona court that Umraogiri Gosain who had recently joined Mahadji side was killed in the engagement between the Shinde's forces and those of the English near Kale Bag.⁴ But it was not true, as there were conflicting reports as a later dispatch said that Umraogiri Gosavi was killed in the Shinde's battle against the English near Sipri Kolaras.⁵ From the dispatch it also appeared that Shinde was facing a setback. His dispatches to the *karbhari*s revealed that he was in dire need of at least ten thousand further recruits to retrieve his position.⁶

Ahilyabai could send only a small contingent as there was no money to muster a large contingent from Indore. Trimbak Ingle from Holkar side joined Shindes forces with a contingent of two thousand men.⁷ Now Mahadji with his improved position started a bold offensive, exerting himself night and day, without the usual comforts of food and rest. On first July 1781 he inflicted a severe defeat on Col Muir near Sipri and established his camp on what is known as Buddha - Pahad in the vicinity of Jhansi. Col Muir encamped at Sipri with less than forty miles distance between the two.

By September 1781 the major fighting seems to have died down giving place to a sort of stalemate between the two opposing camps. By September Shinde was camping at Kale Bagh on the Kali Sind River which was now swollen with the recent rains in the area. The English were stationed on the opposite bank but their supplies were being continually intercepted by the Shinde's reserves in the Sipri -Kolaras region.⁸ By this time Shinde had virtually trapped the English forces camping on the plains of Sipri - Kolaras. Fodder has become scarce in the

¹ Ibid., AR No.73/26th July 1781

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., AR No.75/29th July 1781

⁴ Ibid., AR No.79/2nd August 1781

⁵ Ibid., AR No.84/August 1781

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Maheshwar Darbarchi Batmi Patren*, Vol.1, No.42/3-3-1781

⁸ *Poona Akhbars*, Vol.1, AR No.101/Sept 1781

English camp.¹ Seeing the situation getting out of control English drew Marathas to the negotiation table.

Failure of English forces was partly due to their failure to tap local support. Efforts made to get support from Rajput chiefs in the neighbourhood against the Marathas didn't succeed.² So was the case with Rana of Gohad. Gwalior was restored to Rana of Gohad, hoping that he would support English forces but Rana didn't deploy his resources to help them as he was considering making terms with Shinde.³ Reports from Poona later on also confirmed this opinion, as the Jat of Gohad seeing the English forces go down to Marathas, was secretly trying to be with Shinde now.⁴

Finally, "The Treaty of Salbai left Mahadji Shinde, through whom it was negotiated, in a much stronger and virtually independent position."⁵ Mahadji Shinde emerged from the First Anglo-Maratha War a wiser and more mature statesman than he had been earlier. "He withdrew from the South and engaged himself in the strenuous task of rebuilding the Maratha Empire in Hindustan as a sort of counterpoise to the establishment of British rule in North-East India."⁶

Shinde came very close to British while he negotiated with them the terms of the Treaty of Salbai. He had the honour to represent the Maratha power on behalf of the Poona Court during the negotiations with David Anderson the British representative. In the process of the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Salbye which was ratified by Peshwa on 20th December 1782 and formally exchanged on 24th February 1783, he emerged as an important man for the British and won their friendship. Governor General Hastings ensured that on no account Shinde's interests were to be harmed so as to avoid enmity with him.⁷ Even appointment of Malet as Resident at Poona court in 1784 was made after taking Shinde into confidence. Malet was asked to visit Shinde's camp in the North before joining his office at the Poona court as British knew the importance that Mahadji held in their scheme of things now and wanted to keep friendly ties undisturbed. Mahadji

¹ Ibid., AR No.116/ 1781

² Duff, J G , *History of The Mahrattas*, Vol. 2, p.318

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Poona Akhbars*, AR No.116/ 1781

⁵ Sen, Sailendra Nath, *Anglo-Maratha Relations* (1785-96), Madras, 1974, p.13

⁶ Ibid., p.15

⁷ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.121

represented British interest at Poona court and enjoyed his esteemed position in Poona politics as an arbitrator or conciliator between the Marathas and the British.¹ First English Resident David Anderson and later Residents at Shindes court ensured this friendship with Shinde and he was not interfered in his North India affairs till he was alive. "Governor General Cornwallis also remained wedded to the policy of neutrality" towards the Marathas even at the expense of Maratha expansion in North India.²

Besides turning friendly to English, Mahadji also took lessons from them in organizing his own military rank and cadre. Poor performance of Maratha cavalry forced Mahadji to recruit local men from North India. Experience in the battle field especially the Anglo-Maratha War changed his outlook. He watched regular forces of English perform from very close quarters during this war and this helped him make up his mind to raise a regular army based on European pattern.

After Anglo-Maratha war Holkar was inclined towards Nana Phadnis as both needed each other to counter Shinde's growing influence in Maratha Politics after his recent successes. Tukoji mostly remained posted in the South and his Central India bases to do military duty for the Poona court. He returns to North only after Mahadji demanded military support from Nana as he suffered setback at Lalsot in 1787. Then only Tukoji and Ali Bahadur were sent to North to the aid of Maratha forces fighting under Mahadji Shinde's command. However, both Holkar and Ali Bahadur by and large played a negative role, first their arrival in the North was delayed- starting after rains in September, 1787 they joined Shinde in Nov 1788 14 months later, by the time Shinde had regained his lost position.³ Soon after their arrival they started demanding half share in the conquests made in Hindustan by Mahadji's forces. This dispute continued for a while before Mahadji decided to grant certain parts of his conquered territory to Tukoji and Ali Bahadur.

Maratha Supremacy in Hindustan under Mahadji Shinde

As Mahadji freed himself after finalizing the terms of Treaty with English Resident near Gwalior at the beginning of 1783, he now geared himself for the conquest of some of the toughest local elites on the northern rim of Malwa plateau

¹ Sen, Sailendra Nath, *op.cit.*, pp. 20-21

² Ibid., p.298

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.275

and on the way to Hindustan and Rajputana - the Gohad Jats, the Khichi Rajputs of Raghogarh, and the Bundelas, these local elites had been defiant since beginning of the Maratha rule in Malwa.

Rana Chhatar Singh of Gohad was inclined towards English forces fighting against Mahadji in the Eastern sector during the Anglo- Maratha war. It seems Rana of Gohad seeing the English lose the contest with Mahadji later started making friendly gestures to him by the end of 1781 as it was reported to the Poona court.¹ But English agents reported dispute between Mahadji Shinde and Chhatar Singh in their dispatch on 18th February & 18 March, 1782² which continued in April 1783 as well.³ It was the period when Mahadji and British Agents were negotiating the terms of Treaty of Salbai. As the treaty was ratified by Poona court and signed in early 1783, Mahadji freed himself and started the siege of Gwalior fort lost to Rana of Gohad earlier. From two separate dispatches of English agent David Anderson the siege seems to have started in April-May 1783 and was continuing in October, 1783.⁴ Gwalior was back with Shinde in 1784 after a protracted siege.⁵ Next he besieged Rana Chhatar Singh's home bastion - the mud fort of Gohad ⁶ and captured it making Rana surrender, again after a tough fight where Maratha artillery was used to reduce the mud fort.⁷

Khichi Rajputs of Raghogarh were next target of Shinde's forces. Khichis lay on way to the recently opened and much shorter route to Ujjain and Indore as one went south leaving the Mughal highway from Agra at Shivpuri, 65 miles south west of Gwalior. Marathas needed to keep the route to their headquarters in Malwa free of any disturbance. Khichis had only submitted under military pressure in the past and had recently forcibly seized territories under Holkar's control. Chhabra

¹ *Poona Akhbars*, Vol.1, AR No.116/ 1781

² *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 18 Feb. 1782 (3-4); S 18 Mar.1782 (4)

³ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 21 April 1783 (13)

⁴ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 12 May , 1783 (9A); S 21, Oct. ,1783 (10B)

⁵ Duff, J G, *History of The Mahrattas*, Reprint, Delhi, 1990, Vol. 2, p.339

⁶ *Foreign Department Record*, NAI, S 16 Dec. 1783 (3)

⁷ Rajadhyaksha, N V, *op.cit.*, pp.97-98, also see pp. 354-355/L. No,18/4-5-1783, Jiva Dada, Mahadji Shindes military wrote during the siege of Gohad ... आतां गोहदवाल्या जाटाने ग्वालेर किल्ला इंग्रजाने देउन गेला, तो घेणे ,पाप्त , यास्तव जाटाच्या मुलखांचे पारिपत्य करून गढी धेतली , बरोबर फौज लाख आहे , नित्यखर्च भारी लाखों रूपयांचा पेंच,

and Gugar tracts were handed over to Holkar in lieu of tribute but were taken back by the Khichis in 1785.¹ After assuming the responsibility as Mughal Emperor's regent, *Wakil-i-Mullaq* he had additional resources at his command. Mahadji sent Khandoji Ingle and Muhammad Beg Hamadani from Agra with a strong force to reduce Khichis in March 1785 when he heard of Holkar's areas being taken over by Khichis. Khichis gave a tough fight to the forces led by Mahadji Shinde, during the fight to secure his safety Khichi chief Balwant Singh left the open field in August 1785 and fought from Raghogarh fort for several months. As Maratha forces suffered reverses, Mahadji sent reinforcement under Ambaji Ingle and only in April 1786 after a year of warfare Khichi chief surrendered but his son Jai Singh remained free troubling Maratha convoys on the way to Ujjain & Indore in the later years.²

Mahadji simultaneously sent his forces to Bundelkhand. This expedition in 1785-86 to reduce the local Bundela chiefs under Apa Khanderao was De Boigne's first venture with five new battalions under Maratha banner. It was not a perfect start for the French military general who started a new era of warfare & conquests in the North for Mahadji Shinde. Apa Khanderao's forces subordinated most of Bundela chiefs in April 1785 after some resistance but got stuck during the siege of famous Kalinjar fort as Panna ruler's regent Beni Huzuri dodged Maratha forces in the difficult local terrain even after suffering heavy defeat. The campaign prolonged and it took Maratha army 19 months to get out of Bundelkhand as they were cornered by Bundela chiefs till December 1786.³

With virtually all local elites under control in Central India Mahadji started a new era of campaign in Hindustan. New Artillery and Infantry cadres of De Boigne's regular army along with Maratha cavalry and Emperor's Mughal army's command also conferred on him by Shah Alam⁴ swelling Mahadji's ranks to 30,000 soldiers. Shinde also had additional resources at his disposal now as Shah Alam handed over the management of the provinces of Delhi and Agra to him.⁵ Mahadji through his Maratha *sardar* Rayaji Patil took over Agra fort in March

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, pp.211-213

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., pp.220-222

⁴ Duff, J G, *History The Mahrattas*, Vol. 2, p.343

⁵ Ibid., p.342

1784 and Aligarh fort came to his control in November 1784. These strong forts served as garrison for his Army.¹ However, this powerful army after successes in the beginning shrank as desertions by Mughal troops marred Lalsot campaign.

After the Lalsot Campaign a Maratha contingent numbering 5000, raised by his devoted agents at Jambgaon (Shinde's family estate in Maharashtra) joined him along with forces led by Tukoji and Ali Bahadur.² De Boigne got orders to raise more battalions and guns for artillery as Mahadji completely loosened his purse strings for him at a time when his *Deccani* army was poorly paid.³

Thus a powerful army was formed to take on the might of the powerful local elites of Hindustan like Ismail Beg, Ghulam Kadir, Najaf Khan, as well as the rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur of Rajasthan, in their own bastions. De Boigne's new battalions which were expanded once again after their appreciable performance at Patan and Merta in 1790 made Mahadji supreme in Hindustan. Maratha forces ran through most of Rajasthan, Doab and Delhi-Aligarh- Mathura-Agra region during the period 1788-1792. Around this time almost all powerful elements in Hindustan came to accept Mahadji's supremacy. Many wanted to be associated with him for their own gains, Ranjit Singh Jat, Partap Singh Naruka, Karauli chief, Banaras ruler Chet Singh, Kota chief Zalim Singh Jhala all became Shinde's regular ally as he began to dispense his power from Mathura his new headquarter in the North. Mahadji's sphere of influence touched its limits during the period 1790-94.

However his own Maratha sardars and Poona court let him down in his ambitious Northern campaigns. Tukoji Holkar and Ali Bahadur who had come to aid Maratha forces after the debacle at Lalsot in 1787, kept on worrying Shinde by their demand for a share in the conquests of Hindustan. Shinde himself in severe financial strain all these years since the Anglo-Maratha war had been demanding support from Nana Phadnis but the latter was jealous to see his rise since the Anglo-Maratha War. Mahadji's squabbles with Holkar and Ali Bahadur during their stay in the North were Nana's doings. To settle his disputes with them and for his own peace of mind Shinde started for Poona in January, 1792 from North via Ujjain to meet Peshwa and Nana Phadnis. He had expressed his feelings of

¹ Ibid.,

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.275

³ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, J N Sarkar (trans & ed), pp.31,35

marching to Poona earlier in October 1791 during his stay in Rajasthan, “*I shall go to Poona and get the Peshwa to settle my dispute with Ali Bahadur and Tukoji Holkar. Thereafter I shall promptly return here.*”¹ In course of his stay, on 24th February, 1794 he died at his Wanawadi camp just outside Poona leaving both Shinde and Holkar families in a bitter fight in the North and subsequent weakening of both the families and Maratha power in the North and Central India.

Overview

Anglo-Maratha war saw Mahadji Shinde mature as a military leader and a diplomat as he negotiated the terms of Treaty of Salbai on behalf of the Marathas. His position soared in the Poona court. At the time of the Treaty of Salbai in 1782-83, Maratha power had completed seventy years since Balaji Vishwanath became the Peshwa (1713) and had grown stronger and stronger over the years under his successors, his own son and grandsons. Shinde and Holkar had helped the Maratha central leadership expand the Maratha sphere of influence well within Jaipur and Jodhpur boundaries in the North West, Delhi court in the North and Jhanshi in the East. Before the Panipat some spirited Shinde leaders like Duttaji and Jankoji Shinde had also roamed with their forces in Punjab and further up in the North, touching Afghanistan borders. However in these seventy years under the Peshwas Maratha forces did suffer some serious setbacks too as they lost control over all their possessions in the North and were driven back to their bases in southern Malwa after Panipat. Later as we have seen a come back of sorts was made as Malhar Rao Holkar, Mahadji Shinde and Raghunath Rao (Raghoba) in 1760s fought back and regained some of their lost possessions in Rajasthan and western Malwa but couldn't overcome the Jats and the Rohillas operating in Doab, North Malwa and Bundelkhand. Peshwa's sardars Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna along with Mahadji Shinde and Tukoji/Ahilyabai Holkar led the revival of Maratha power in the North in the 1770s despite the differences among themselves. They could have been much more successful had they been united. Because some important North Indian leaders like Sawai Madho Singh, Jawahar Singh Jat and Najib-ud-Daula passed away in quick succession, leaving the field wide open for the Marathas. Bringing back Emperor Shah Alam to Delhi in 1772

¹ Ibid., No.31/9th October, 1791

by Mahadji Shinde and Visaji Krishna was a great achievement. But soon after, all Maratha leaders quit North as the Poona court plunged into crisis with the murder of Peshwa Narayanrao. Peshwa's murderer Raghoba allied with British forces threatening the very existence of Maratha power in Maharashtra and Central India as British forces tried to take over Poona, the Maratha seat of Power. The seven year long Anglo-Maratha war that concluded with the Treaty of Salbai in 1782-83 made both Maratha court at Poona and British headquarters in Calcutta take note of Mahadji Shinde's growing stature as the war progressed both in the Western and Eastern sectors. Along with Nana Phadnis, Mahadji thwarted all British manoeuvres to take over Maratha bases in Maharashtra and Central India. Post First Anglo-Maratha war Shinde detached himself from South politics of the Marathas and came in closer contact with the British power in India. Shinde was pragmatic and made necessary adjustment to survive in the politics of North. An English resident attended Shinde's court and his army too had European generals to muster regular force for him. Shinde's wakil was also placed in British headquarters at Calcutta. Shinde left behind Tukoji and other Maratha sardars far behind in military strength as local elites of North submitted to him one after the other. The forces of Macheri, Karauli and Kota chiefs rallied behind him. He had no problem with the English in the East. With the signing of the Treaty of Salbai, Shinde was given a free hand in his North Indian ambitions from the British side who kept themselves restricted up to the court of Awadh till the time Mahadji lived.

CHAPTER 4

MARATHA RULE IN THE TERRITORY OF SHINDE AND HOLKAR

“Our State is big and vast, good and bad are intermixed. You will please discriminate, and keep each one in his proper place. As to myself I look to none higher than your good-self.”

Tukojee Holkar to Ahilyabai Holkar (30-6-1789)¹

Most of the resources and time of Shinde and Holkar were consumed in prolonged campaigns to assert Maratha domination and control far away from their bases developed in Central India. Secondly both sardars possessed widely scattered *saranjams* making it difficult to consolidate and exercise full authority far away from their headquarters. Barring the peaceful pockets of South Malwa and Khandesh nearby their headquarters Indore and Ujjain, the whole state-machinery was geared to launching campaigns for tribute collections and fresh territorial acquisitions. Away from the Maratha centres, local elites were not inclined to pay tribute. Resistance and recalcitrance to Maratha rule was very common in the frontier areas. Kota as a Maratha centre on Rajasthan –Malwa border did solve this problem for Shinde to some extent. However the local elite were also encouraged to defy Maratha presence as Shinde and Holkar were not united. As the period advanced their rivalry intensified promoting a degree of freedom to local elites in the outlying areas. Peshwa also distanced himself from the affairs of North as the period progressed, concentrating more on Maharashtra. As the period advanced their rivalry intensified promoting a degree of freedom to local elites in the outlying areas.

Holkars had started settling the areas of south Malwa and Khandesh soon after they were granted to them by the Peshwa as in this part of Holkar’s territory peace returned early. Later on Ahilyabai Holkar developed and managed south-west Malwa from Maheshwar carrying forward Malhar Rao Holkar’s work. Located in the deep south Holkar’s territory escaped the Jat attack and occupation after the Battle of Panipat. Holkars were fortunate to have a highly devoted

¹ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, V. V. Thakur (ed.), Vol.1, Indore, 1944, No.226/30-6-1789

administrator in Ahilyabai. She was trained in household administration by her father-in-law Malhar Rao after the death of her husband Khande Rao Holkar.¹ But beyond Ujjain in the north peace seems to have been short lived through out the period of study. As Rajput, Jat, Sikh and Bundelas converged over the outer rim of Malwa after the debacle in the Battle of Panipat; Shinde's domain seldom enjoyed peace except for the territory around Ujjain & Kota. In the North & East Malwa it was Jats attack after Panipat, later Anglo-Maratha War, Shinde's attempts to reduce Khichis Rajputs and Jats of Gohad in the 1780s. Peace prevailed in to some extent in the north- west Malwa around Kota as the local Rajput chief's *diwan* Zalim Singh Jhala became an ally of Shinde in the later period.

In the directly controlled areas of Central India under Shinde & Holkar Maratha set up was not much different from those of the Peshwa's directly administered areas in south-eastern Malwa and Khandesh studied by S N Sen² & most recently by Stewart Gordon³ and as described in the records from period of Peshwa Madhav Rao in *Selections from the Satara Raja's and the Peshwas Diaries*.⁴ That certain area under Holkar's rule were better administered than other Maratha held territory is also to be accepted.

Just like in Peshwas territory, In Shinde and Holkar's territory in Central India and further North *Kamavisdar* was the in-charge of revenue collection from the area assigned to him. He was assisted by a group of officials: *fadins*, *Majumdar* and *karkun who were* to look after the works of accounting and data collection. Attachment of a body of armed retainers *Shibandi* with the *Kamavisdar* in the *thanas and nakas* settled by them is also noticed in Marathi and Rajasthani correspondences (*Kharitas*) of the period.

¹ Ahilyabai was actively involved in the household administration during the period of Malhar Rao, see *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.175,176,182,191,192,198,218, even Ahilyabai in 1765 submits the Budget of the Household Department to Malhar Rao Holkar from the Gwalior Camp See especially No.218 ; and Malhar Rao used to pass on instructions to her on how to run the affairs of the Holkars while he himself was engaged in campaigns on the frontiers, See for example No. 205,206,207,210,212,216,219,220,221,224,226, 227,229,236, 241,243,251

² Sen, S N, *Administrative System of the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1976

³ Gordon, Stewart, 'The Slow Conquest: Administrative Integration of Malwa into the Maratha Empire, 1720-1760', *MAS*, Vol.11, 1977

⁴ *Selections from the Satara Raja's and the Peshwas Diaries*, 9 Vols., Vad, R B G C & D B Parasnis (ed.) Poona and Bombay, 1905-11

Internal Functioning of Holkar Household State

Territories of Holkar and Shinde allotted by Peshwa were known as *Daulat*. Peshwa Bajirao and his successor Balaji Bajirao allotted territories in piecemeal fashion to both sardars in Khandesh, Malwa and further North as Maratha expansion beyond Narmada in the North progressed during the period of the Peshwas.

Holkar also had additional revenue free grant known as *Khasgi* allotted to wife of Malhar Rao Holkar, Gautamibai in 1734. After Malhar Rao's death in 1767 Madhaorao Peshwa confirmed *Daulat* and *Khasgi* on Ahilyabai Holkar¹ After the first grant made by Peshwa to Holkar in 1728, both Shinde and Holkar's territorial acquisitions by way of grant kept on increasing almost every year (In the beginning even unconquered areas were assigned to sardars too encourage them to make fresh acquisitions.). To encourage Holkar and Shinde in their military campaigns grants were made on regular basis.² By the time of the battle of Panipat most of the areas in Central India had been granted to the two sardars. They also collected revenue from territories in Kota, Bundi and Rampura principalities lying on the borders of Malwa. Many of the later grants made by Peshwa were awarded jointly to both Shinde and Holkar.³ As it were in the case of Bundi & Kota.

In the distribution of Central India tracts Peshwa retained parganas in eastern Khandesh and Malwa under his direct control while other parganas were assigned to Shinde, Holkar and Pawar in 1732. Parts of Bundelkhand given to Peshwa by Chhatrasal Bundela too remained under the direct control of the Peshwa.⁴

When the first division of territories among Shinde, Holkar and Pawar was made in 1732, Holkar being the senior most *sardar* received the best of the remaining territories after Peshwa had kept aside the crucial areas for himself. Two-fifth of Malwa was granted to Holkar in 1732 as *saranjam* for maintenance of his army.⁵ Later Holkar was awarded more *saranjams* in western Khandesh and

¹ *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.13/11-12-1767

² *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.86/1751-52; No.94/1752-53; No.96/4-3-1753; No.120/9-1-1756

³ *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.119/2-1-1756

⁴ Pogson, W. R., *A History of the Boondelas*, Delhi, 1974, p.105

⁵ *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.26/22-6-1732

adjoining south-western Malwa. Indore & Maheshwar emerged as their administrative headquarters. Ahilyabai chose to administer her state from Maheshwar. After Malhar Rao's death in 1767 Madhav Rao Peshwa confirmed *Daulat* and *Khasgi* on Ahilyabai Holkar.¹ Ahilyabai preferred to stay at Maheshwar situated on the banks of Narmada and from here only she looked after Holkar's administration though Indore remained Holkars' headquarter.

Ranoji Shinde's possessions were located in central and north-west Malwa adjoining those of Holkar. At many places they not only shared boundaries but crossed each other making it difficult to map their possessions with clear cut boundaries as was the case at Kota.² There was no uniformity in distribution of territories as from the beginning Peshwa's intention was to place them opposite to each other in a check mate fashion, by liberally intermixing the territories assigned to Shinde and Holkar evident even in grants made in the later periods too. "It was deliberately made complicated so that power could gravitate to the Peshwa's fellow caste Brahman collectors and agents" says Jagdish Narayan Sarkar³ and adds "The revenue was apportioned among the chiefs in a way which ensured their respective interests in collecting for the common state funds. But none had a compact area that would make him independent."⁴

The revenue collection in Central India and further north came to be managed by the two sardars after the initial spate of campaigns gave way to stabilized control over their assigned possessions. Peshwas grant to Shinde and Holkar allowed them the right to collect revenue from their possessions and raise army to further Peshwa's power and territorial possessions in the North.

Interference from Peshwa office at Poona was only at the highest level in matters of revenue and finance sparing day to day matters of revenue and general administration solely in the hands of Shinde and Holkar. Moreover there was a visible shift in Peshwa's interest in political and administrative matters in the North from the time of Bajirao's successors Balaji Bajirao who started concentrating more on South compared to Bajirao's policy of Maratha expansion

¹ *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, No.13/11-12-1767

² Tracts were assigned here to Shinde, Holkar and Pawar and revenue collection work was jointly handled till the time each sardars didn't depute his own officials, See *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, A B Phalke (ed.), Gwalior, 1929

³ Sarkar, Jagdish Narayan, *A Study of Eighteenth Century India*, Calcutta, 1976, pp.185-186

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.185

in the North. Panipat debacle too added to Peshwa's disenchantment with North at Personal level. Madhav Rao did assert his power in the disputes that took place over succession after Battle of Panipat in Shinde's family and later after Malhar Rao's death, over the succession of Ahilyabai Holkar, involving his uncle Raghunath Rao. That was the last time Peshwa's office was seriously involved in working out alternative ways to soothe disenchanted widows of Shinde family and some other administrative matters related with succession of Mahadji Shinde and Ahilyabai. Peshwa's office had then acted as Raghunathrao's interference started hurting Shinde and Holkar and caught Peshwa's attention.

Soon after the death of Narayan Rao, ensuing political instability and emergence of Nana Phadnis as Peshwa's crisis manager in political and administrative matters with little interest in affairs of North especially those of his rival Mahadji Shinde¹ left the two houses quite independent in their local administration and military organisation.

From the period of Bajirao, Shinde and Holkar's obligations besides raising and maintaining an army was depositing a part of the revenue (*Dewan Deni*) collected from their region in Peshwa's treasury. In the initial phases Bajirao had appointed his own men in Malwa to look after administrative matters so as to relieve Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde from burden of administration of their *sarnajms* and related matters and concentrate solely on Maratha campaigns in the North.

Naro Shankar was deputed by Peshwa to act as *kamavisdar* of prant Malwa, to collect tributes from local chiefs.² Similarly Balaji Yeshwant Gulgule was appointed the *kamavisdar* of Kota in 1732 to manage Peshwa as well as his sardars Shinde, Holkar and Pawars revenue collection from that area.³ Ramchandra Baba looked after Shindes *saranjam* in Malwa in the early years after they were assigned to him.⁴ It was only in 1740 that Poona court appointed Gangadhar Yeshwant Chandrachud and Ramaji Yadava Palshikar as officials of Holkar who were to

¹ Holkar's relations with Nana Phadnis were much more businesslike compared to Shinde as Holkar papers shows regular businesses being conducted with Peshwa unlike the tense relations of Mahadji Shinde with Nana Phadnis

² *Holkarshahcai Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, L.22/8-7-1731

³ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, A B Phalke (ed.), Vol.1. p.3

⁴ Rajadhyaksha, V. N., *True History of the Scindias*, Bombay, 1907, p.46

continue to serve Holkar for long as his chief civilian officers.¹ The process of transfer of administrative functions to Shinde and Holkar was gradual. The hectic campaigns in the Malwa and Rajasthan were on those days; it was only after Battle of Bhopal in 1738 that things started settling down in Malwa as the two sardars appointed their own officials in consultation with Poona court.

Territories assigned to Malhar Rao Holkar were brought under Maratha administration just after Malwa *suba* came under the control of the Marathas in 1741. Holkar's official correspondences shows that in parganas of western Malwa and villages assigned to Holkar in western Malwa, agriculture and trading activity picked up in 1740s. Gangadhar Chandrachud and Ramaji Palsikar were the official appointed to manage his affairs at his headquarter-Indore, as he himself was promoted to the post of *subadar* of Malwa.

By 1742, kamavisdars appointed by Holkar in areas assigned to him had started functioning, in a letter of this year the *kamavisdar* of Indore was asked by Malhar Rao to release the territory granted to Tejakarana Mandloi son of Nanadlal Mnadloi the local zamindar, showing the subordination and rehabilitation of some of the rights of the earlier local elite of the area. Another letter of 1742 shows one of the officials of Malhar Rao, Bhojraj asking the local *kamavisdar* to make peace with Tejakarana. In 1743, Malhar through his *kanungo* of pargana Indore encouraged outside merchants and *sahukars* to come and settle at Indore. Further in 1747 through his *kanungo* he invited merchants and other businessmen from Ujjain and the surrounding territory to settle at Indore.

In 1750s and 1760s Malhar gave attention to strengthening of his army especially artillery. In 1753 he appointed officials to manage his workshops and factories producing fire arms and ammunitions, he appointed *karkhanadars* for Dhodap, Chandwad and Indragad forts. In 1760s he had set up factories at Gwalior and Sironj to manufacture fire arms during the campaign against Jats and Bundelas. As he got busy in these campaigns, he engaged his family members too in the administration of his *saranjam*.* Ahilyabai looked after the supply of provisions to fighting troops during the campaigns in north eastern Malwa in the early 1760s. In 1761, he informed the officials of Indore that his grandson Malerao

¹ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.50/21-10-1740

would take the necessary steps in connection with the agricultural arrangements of Indore and Depalpur pargans.

Holkars were fortunate to have a highly devoted administrator in Ahilyabai. She was trained in administration work by her father-in-law after the death of her husband Khande Rao Holkar. Ahilyabai Holkar developed and managed south-west Malwa & Khandesh from Maheshwar as in this part of Holkar's territory peace returned early and Malhar Rao Holkar started settling the areas soon after they were granted to him by the Peshwa. Located in the deep south far away from the Maratha line of control in the North, Holkar's territory escaped the Jat attack and occupation after the Battle of Panipat.

In directly controlled areas of Holkar two kinds of arrangement were in place for revenue collection. Revenue from the territories were assigned to Maratha sardars to raise and maintain a body of troops for Holkar's army and such assignments were known as *fauj saranjam*. A part of the revenue collected by the *sardar* was to be deposited with the state treasury. First grant of this kind were reported in the year 1738 when Malhar Rao granted half of the *mokasa* of pargana Bardawad to Ramaji Pant for the maintenance of an armed contingent (*paga*).¹ Again in 1741 Ramaji Yadava was allotted remaining part of Bardawad pargana and the village of Bhatgaon for the maintenance of his troops (*paga*).² Ramaji also received another grant, *mokasa* of Kelan the same day that year along with Gangadhar Yeshwant who got the *mokasa* of Dongargaon.³ Award of *saranjam* grants to Holkar sardars were continued even in the later period as recently conquered and occupied areas in Doab were granted in *saranjam* along with territories in Central India. In 1758 Malhar Rao Holkar assigned pargana Alipur Kheda in the *Doab* to Anandrao Rama Palshikar as *Saranjam* replacing it earlier incumbent Chimanaji Govind.⁴

In 1762 Malhar Holkar assigned a village in pargana Sundersi (not far away from Ujjain) in *saranjam* to Makajee Dhamdhare to serve in the field with 11

¹ Ibid., No. 41/10-3-1738

² Ibid., No. 52/2-12-1741

³ Ibid., No. 53/2-12-1742

⁴ Ibid., No. 132/1-4-1758

persons (*Khasa Sawar-5, Karwal-5, Karkun-1*), and the land under the village was to be brought under cultivation.¹

Saranjams were also granted in far off areas. Narayanjee Bargal was allotted half the revenue of pargana Budha in Mewar, in 1765 Malhar Rao Holkar passed an order to continue the *saranjam kharch* grant to Narayanjee Bargal.²

The *sarnjam* were revoked in case of the *sardar* happened to incur the displeasure of the Holkar family chief as it happened in case of Govindrao Bulye's *saranjam*. In 1765 Malhar Holkar issued orders to Ahilyabai and Malerao Holkar to release his *saranjam* revoking the earlier order.³ So was the case of Piraji Pise whose villages in grant in Sundarsi were attached and later in 1766 Malhar revoked his earlier order.⁴

A rough idea about areas given in *saranjam* to Holkars' sardars for their service in the state army comes from a list issued by the Holkar state in 1777. The document refers the areas listed in the document as *saranjam* of Tukoji Holkar, chief of Holkar's army under whose command all the sardars served the Holkar state. After the death of Malhar Rao Holkar Ahilyabai was looking after the civil administration and Tukoji Rao was assigned the duty of commanding the Holkar's army. The names of various sardars and the areas allotted to them in *saranjam* with revenue figures in 1777⁵ were as given below:

<i>Sardar</i>	<i>Parganas</i>	<i>Revenue (Rupees)</i>
Govind Rao Bule	Patan	75,000
	Jhabua	85,000
	Chikhalde	35,000
	Total:	1,95,000
Bagh	Mahatpur & some villages	3,00,000
	In pargana Unnan	
Madhorao Bagh	Betma	30,000
Narayanji Bargal	Budhe	75,000
	Narayangarh and Karhai	6,000
	Village in Nimbalraipur	15,000
	Pargana	
	Total:	96,000

¹ Ibid., No. 172/ 6-8-1762

² Ibid., No. 238/16-11-1765

³ Ibid., No. 236/6-11-1765

⁴ Ibid., No. 247/11-2-1766

⁵ Ibid., No. 98/1777

Lambhate	Jirapur	30,000
	Machalpur	30,000
	Total:	60,000
Yashwantrao Phanse	Tarane	1,15,000
Baburao Baghmaare	Sawer	1,04,000
Appajiram	Bardawad	30,000
Naro Ganesh	Panchpahad	50,000
Bhagwat & Khatke	Javra(e)	60,000
Govind Rao Mahadik	Piplauda	4,000
Khandoji Nalge	Raipur	16,000
Dhamdhere	Ambar	40,000
	Adaawad	60,000
	Mauje Dahi	60,000
	Total:	1,60,000
Bhagwat	Baagdara Taluka	15,000
Rajole Madhorao	Hasalpur	12,000
	Jamb	3,500
	Share in Budhe pargana	10,000
	Total:	33,000
Pise	Badgaon etc.	5,000

But much more widespread arrangement for revenue collection was by assigning areas to *kamavisdars*, a practice that had been adopted in Peshwa ruled territory in Maharashtra and parts of Central India.¹

Kamavisdars served as link between the local elements and the central authority as they were directly reporting about the work of administration and revenue collection in their assigned parganas to the Holkar headquarters. They were equivalent to Mughal *jagirdars* but didn't perform military functions. Besides, revenue collection *kamavisdars* were responsible for maintaining law and order in their areas and implement Holkar's directives in their parganas.

Study of Holkar documents provides an idea about area under each *kamavisdar* and their tenure at a particular place of posting. Holkar seem to have started appointing *kamavisdars* as early as 1732 to perform revenue collection work in pargana allotted to them by the Peshwa. Katkut and Bagoda near by Indore were the areas that are referred in the Holkar state documents having *kamavisdars* in 1733.² Indore which later developed as their headquarter along with Maheshwar, located nearby in the south west on the banks of Narmada, came under Malhar

¹ Gordon, Stewart, 'The Slow Conquest' *MAS*, Vol. 11, 1977, p19-29

² *Holkarshahica Itihasaci Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.29/1733

Rao's control in 1733. Documents prove that as early as 1742 Holkars had *kamavisdars* already working at Indore.¹

In Kota also Holkar had a *kamavisdar* working for them in 1746.² By 1756 Holkar's *kamavisdar* was also collecting revenue from Patan in Rajasthan jointly with Shindes *kamavisdar* Gulgule and he was asked to show co-operation in all matters with the latter.³ In 1756 Malhar also granted *kamavisdars* of Pargana Kalburga to Bhivji Baburao.⁴

That both Malhar Rao Holkar and Ahilya Bai Holkar relied on Kamavisdars for their revenue collection work in their directly controlled territory in Malwa and Khandesh is proved from the list of *kamavisdars* of different parganas (at different periods) culled out from Holkars state papers. After the Battle of Panipat Holkar's revenue and civil administrative arrangements seems to have stabilized in Malwa and Khandesh as both Ahilyabai and Mal Rao (Malhar's grandson) was engaged by Malhar Rao Holkar to look after the administrative arrangements while he was on campaigns. During the entire period Kamavisdars were directly reporting to head of the Holkar family with their annual account sheets. Malhar Rao and Ahilyabai Holkar had one to one rapport with the *kamavisdars* looking after different tracts assigned to them.

There was stricter regulation of *kamavisdars* after Panipat by Holkars as they personally approved the accounts of each area assigned to Kamavisdars each year. In 1763 Malhar Rao Holkar approved 17,900 and 10,000 rupees received separately from the *kamavisdar* of Pargana Ambad.⁵ When needed particular *kamavisdars* was asked to report at the headquarter. Khando Sadashiv, *kamavisdar* of pargana Bardawad was ordered in Jan 1774 to report at Maheshwar to settle the contribution amount to be decided by the government.⁶ Chintaman Moreshwar, *kamavisdar* of Pidhawa in 1790 wrote to Ahilyabai that he would be present in her court with the account sheet of his pargana by the end of the month of Ashad

¹ Ibid., No.54/26-3-1742; No.55/1742; No.61/3-2-1744

² Ibid., No.65/14-2-1746

³ Ibid., No.122/14-6-1756

⁴ Ibid., No.121/31-05-1756

⁵ Ibid., No.188/8-11-1763; No.189/16-11-1763

⁶ Ibid., No. 59/13-1-1774

(June-July).¹ In 1792, Narayan Govind, *kamavisdar* of Devale pargana was urged by Ahilyabai to see her with all account and with officer of the pargana. Payment of arrears was urged.²

To verify the account presented by a particular *kamavisdars*, local officials of the pargana were also consulted. In 1795 Khando Baburao of Pargana Indore submitted his account sheet as ordered by Ahilyabai.³ The *desai* and *kanungo* of pargana Sultanpur submitted the account sheet of 3 years guaranteeing its veracity and saying that they may be prosecuted if found otherwise.⁴ In 1784, the *deshmukh* and *deshpande* of pargana Ambad were consulted to cross check and certify the account -sheets for the years 1183, 1184(*Fasli*) submitted by the local *kamavisdar*. And “They were to their knowledge true” and also “the extra amounts of expenditure incurred in connection with Nabab, Bhonsale and Trimbakrao were done so with our knowledge and consent,” they said.⁵

Accounting of income and expenditure of each pargana under the *kamavisdars* was carefully maintained taking care of even minor expenditures. The *kamavisdar* of pargana Sultanpur was informed in 1767 that the amount of rupees 69/- spent by him for 12 camels carrying Government treasury was credited to the account of the pargana.⁶

In the parganas *kamavisdars* were to promote agriculture work besides their prime duty of revenue collection. Holkar government from time to time also laid down certain common minimum programme for functioning of the *kamavisdars* in their areas. They were to keep the cultivators (*ryots*) and the local zamindars happy by supervising the agriculture work in their areas for better revenue returns. Holkar government promoted the interest of their subject from the time of Malhar Rao Holkar. In fact in 1776 *mamlatdar* of Chandwad was reminded of the efforts made by late Malhar Rao Holkar to restore agricultural work by providing a healing touch to local cultivators in his territory and was asked to follow his footsteps.⁷

¹ Ibid., No.285/27/6/1790

² Ibid., No.374/14-4-1792

³ Ibid., No.420/20-4-1795

⁴ Ibid., No.114/17-8-1779

⁵ Ibid., No.163/17-12-1784

⁶ Ibid., No.5/1-3-1767

⁷ Ibid., No.77/6-6-1776, ... सुभेदारानी कोण कोणत्या प्रकारें आणून रयतेचें संगोपन केले , , , रयतेचीं दिलभरी करून हरएक प्रकारें गौर करीत जाणे ,

Kamavisdars were also asked to co-ordinate with the local zamindar in revenue collection work. In 1776 Holkars' territorial possessions were in 31 different locations earning total revenue of rupees 20 lakhs. Revenue earning from each estate were as follows¹ :

<i>Pargana</i>	<i>Revenue in Rupee</i>
Indore	2,00,000
Tarane	1,00,000
Depalpur	1,25,000
Pirawakothdi	75,000
Rampura	3,00,000
Deole	70,000
Maheshwar	40,000
Gagurni	60,000
Kayeth	25,000
Malhargarh	1,00,000
Mahatpur	2,00,000
Jawara	75,000
Piplauda	30,000
Betma	30,000
Katkut	2,000
Nemawar	10,000
Hasalpur	7,000
Ambe	2,000
Sundarsi	5,000
Aaber	30,000
Sandhara	15,000
Raipur	10,000
Karhai	5,000
Patan	65,000
Patankeshavrai	3,000
Sironj	1,50,000
Sawer	75,000
Jhabua	60,000
Kothada	35,000
Lavani	5,000
Tokrampura	10,000
Total	20,00,00

Besides revenue collection *Kamavisdars* were responsible for maintaining law and order in their areas. They were asked to ensure peace in their areas by quelling disturbances created by Bhils, zamindars and thieves.²

¹ Ibid., No.90/1776-1777

² Ibid., No.21/30-4-1769

Also in purely administrative matters in their respective areas they served as link between the states headquarter and the area they served. Abaji Vishnu, *kamavisdar* of Rampura informed Ahilyabai of the disturbed condition of Rampura due to the high handedness of the Chandrawats, the scarcity of rain, the raids of Bhils and Sondhias and asked her orders to quell the disturbances.¹

Holkar's *kamavisdars* received a fixed sum of money as their salary as well as for maintaining their local office, money was assigned for a carriage (*palki*), for keeping a fixed number of auxilliary troops (*Sibandi*), for maintaining the outpost or *thana* in their area(*Nakezat*, *Thanezat*) and food allowance(*Bhojankharch*). Trimbak Baburao, a *kamavisdar* of Holkar was allotted 30,000 rupees for all these expenditures in his *kamavis* when he got the *sanad* for the post of kamavisdars of Maheshwar in 1769.²

Holkar papers reveal that against revenue collections from their area *kamavisdars* directly financed state's piecemeal expenditures needed from time to time. For each and every type of household needs or work done the state asked local *kamavisdars* to pay the desired amount, directly to the concerned party. State dues were also paid from their account, so were the needs of the sardars going on military campaign.

To pay Peshwas dues in the year 1770, Ahilyabai asked Dinkar Anant, *kamavisdar* of Chandwad to collect contributions from a select list of Kamavisdars and handover the same to Peshwa. Moreover, *kamavisdar* was asked to collect the money fast.³ The total amount to be paid was 60,000 rupees from the following Kamavisdars.

<i>Kamavisdar</i>	<i>Contribution</i>	<i>Pargana</i>
ShidoTukdev	10,000	Mandavgaon
Govind Krishna	5,000	Thalner
Dhondo Ballal	10,000	Sultanpur
Vyankatrao Kashi	10,000	Ambad
Shideshwar Vishnu	5,000	Korhale Taluka
Trimbak Narayan	5,000	Devpur
Mahadji Hari	10,000	Sevgaon
Dinkar Anant	5,000	Chandwad

Total	60,000	

¹ Ibid., No.139/12-9-1782;141/17-9-1782

² Ibid., No.21/30-4-1769

³ Ibid., No.27/14-2-1770 , ... एकूण साठ हजार रूपये सत्वर वसूल करणे,

The *kamavisdar* of Pargana Korhale, Khanderao Vyankatesh was ordered by Ahilyabai to pay his dues of the year rupees 30,000 to the Peshwa under the head Diwan Deni.¹ In 1779, *kamavisdar* of Kota Narhar Murar was asked to send a *hundi* of 100000 rupees from the Kota account for payment to Mahadji Shinde for paying back an earlier amount borrowed by Tukoji in Deccan.²

In case of Holkar's military expenditures *kamavisdars* were asked to pay to concerned *sardar nalbandi* at the time of going for a campaign. Satwaji Gaikwad & Vasudev Sambhaji, *kamavisdars* of pargana Ambad were asked to pay rupees 32,000 to Birbhan Nabid, a shiledar of Holkar for Nalbandi.³ Later in the same year again Malhar Rao Holkar asked *kamavisdar* of Ambad Vasudev Shambhaji to lend 65,000 rupees on which interest was to be paid for the period amount was kept.⁴

The *kamavisdar* of pargana Devale, Anandrao Narhar was asked by Malerao Holkar to pay rupees 5000 to Mhaske Shiledar in 1767 for his secret service.⁵

In 1765 Abaji Vishnu was appointed *kamavisdar* of Ambad pargana and he was ordered by Ahilyabai to pay 1520 rupees from the account of his pargana to Trimbak Rao Shinde Choundikar related to her from her Father side.⁶ Visaji Ranganth, *kamavisdar* of Indore was asked to pay *nalbandi* amount of 7200 rupees to Chaundikar Shindes in 1772.⁷

In 1774, *kamavisdar* of Chandwad was asked by Ahilyabai to purchase grain for the Holkar army that was with Peshwa under the commands of Tukojirao. He was asked to purchase gram of rupees 2000/, *bajree* of rupees 3000/, and wheat of rupees 1000/.⁸

Later it was Tukoji Holkar whose demand for money was regular from the local *kamavisdars* from his camps on the frontiers. The *kamavisdars* of Tarana

¹ Ibid., No.46/13-10-1771

² Ibid., No.111/2-7-1779

³ Ibid., No.31-1-1764

⁴ Ibid., No.202/3-12-1764

⁵ Ibid., No.7/12 -3-1767

⁶ Ibid., No.228/14-3-1765

⁷ Ibid., No.56/1772

⁸ Ibid., No.65/29-11-1774

pargana was warned by Ahilyabai against making payments to Tukoji Holkar when demanded by him from the camp without her sanction.¹ Again in 1770 Ahilyabai ordered the *kamavisdar* of pargana Indore Trimbak Rajdev that the note of payment sent by Tukoji from the camp shall not be accepted without her orders.² *Kamavisdar* of Pargana Chandwad Chinto Narayan was taken to task by Tukoji for not honouring the note of Payment in favour of Raghunathrao. He was now asked to pay the amount to the clerks of the Peshwa.³ Khando Baburao wrote to Ahilyabai against the demands made by Tukoji and Naro Ganesh in 1788. In reply Ahilyabai assured him of no trouble in future and asked him not to give more than 4 to 5 thousand when demanded in future.⁴

There is one instance towards the end of Holkar's regime when they were experiencing financial crisis, Balaji Yadava and Kalyanji Mehta *kamavisdar* of Jhabua were asked to pay the amount of bill made in the name of a banker Padamsey Rajsey from the revenue of the Pargana. Moreover he was warned no delay will be tolerated.⁵

Besides above type of forcible payments ordered from the account of the *Kamavisdars* in the pargana what Holkar papers reveal is that *kamavisdars* directly financed states piecemeal expenditures needed from time to time. For certain job work done for the state. Local *kamavisdars* were asked to pay the desired amount directly to the concerned person.

Charity work happened to be one of the prime concern of Holkars especially Ahilyabai. Several kinds of charity works were financed by local *kamavisdars* on orders of state. Male Rao Holkar in 1767 ordered the *kamavisdar* of *taluka* Cholee to pay 200 rupees annually to Sheshumbhatt a learned and pious Brahmin from Aurangabad, to pray for the welfare of the state.⁶ Ahilyabai ordered the *kamavisdars* of pargana Ambad to make every big village of the pargana to contribute one *maund* of *Jawar-Bajree*; small villages half *maund*. The whole contribution was to go to Anantpuree Nagesh resident of Piathan for feeding

¹ Ibid., No.19/1768

² Ibid., No.30-2-1770

³ Ibid., No.62/9-10-1774

⁴ Ibid., No.202/8-7-1788

⁵ Ibid., No.445/29-6-1797

⁶ Ibid., No.22-1-1767

traveling Brahmins.¹ *Kamavisdar* of *mauza* Lakhangaon in *taluka* Pabal of *sarkar* Junnar was ordered by Tukoji to pay rupees 100 annually for dish & worship service in the temple of Shree Ramchandra built by Naro Appajee in the Tulsi garden in Poona.² The *kamavisdar* of Pargana Sakurabad was ordered by Tukoji Holkar to pay rupees 400 to Ramchandra Pandit Dashputre in charity.³ Maganiram Nagnath *kamavisdar* of Sevgaon was asked by Tukoji to pay 400 rupees to Prahlad Bhatt Badwe of Pandharpur, out of the revenue of the pargana.⁴ Tukoji ordered Wamanaji Hari, *kamavisdar* of Ambad to continue rupees 105 annual grant made to Chimabai Hardasein, now to her daughter Muktabai for worshipping Gods.⁵

Moreover, from time to time *kamavisdars* were asked to part with a portion of their territory by way of grants to particular assignees for charitable purposes. This also put pressure on them as their revenue collection decreased every time such grants were ordered. Moro Vinayak, *kamavisdar* was ordered by Ahilyabai in April 1773 to assign *mauza* Khambpimpri and Khirde to his close relative from Choundikar Shinde family for maintaining their family.⁶ Tukojirao ordered the *kamavisdar* of Pargana Nandurbar in 1770 to transfer 18 villages to the *khasgi* department.⁷ Their accounts were to be maintained separately. The *kamavisdar* of *mauza* Khajrana is ordered by Ahilyabai to continue the gift of 15 *bighas* of land to Tarsha *Fakir* for the upkeep etc. of Peer Nahar Sayad as before.⁸ Sadashiv Raghunath, *kamavisdars* of pargana Raver was ordered to transfer six villages to *Khasgi* Department and they were to be managed by Gangadhar Ballal.⁹

Miscellaneous expenditures were directly made from the accounts of *kamavisdars*. These included petty works done for the state in which case local *kamavisdars* were asked to pay the desired amount directly to the concerned party. The *kamavisdar* of pargana Sultanpur was informed that the amount of rupees 69/- spent by him for 12 camels carrying Government treasury was credited to the

¹ Ibid., No.22/16-6-1768

² Ibid., No.18/29-10-1768

³ Ibid., No.47/1771

⁴ Ibid., No.84/22-08-1776

⁵ Ibid., No.409/20-10-1794

⁶ Ibid., No.57/15-4-1773

⁷ Ibid., No.35/1770

⁸ Ibid., No.121/15-9-1780

⁹ Ibid., No.131/1-2-1782

account of the pargana.¹ Malerao Holkar asked the *kamavisdars* of Patan to pay rupees 180 for 30 *kavadi* (metal pot) of the Ganges water received from Jawala Mundiker.² Trimbak Baburao, *kamavisdar* of Bijagad was ordered by Ahilyabai in 1775 to pay 64 rupees for 8 bullocks engaged by the Peshwa while on his way from Maheshwar to Maharashtra and were not paid for.³ Khando Baburao, *kamavisdars* of Indore was asked to pay 50 rupees per month towards feeding the Bhils who were arrested and confined.⁴ In 1770, rupees one hundred spent on conveyance etc. of Ahilyabai's close relation Rakhmabai Shinde Choundhikar on way to her native place were to be paid by the *Kamavisdar* of Nangalwadi.⁵ Ahilyabai in 1771 ordered Dinkar Anant, *kamavisdar* of pargana Chandwad to pay rupees sixty seven to fourteen attendants on duty for a month and a half in the service of Yeshwantrao Phanse while he was going to Deccan.⁶ *Kamavisdar* of Bijagad Trimbak Baburao was informed by Ahilyabai that 16 rupees spent by him to fetch fireworks from Burhanpur during the marriage of Dhondiba Phanse will be paid by the government.⁷ Sitaram Bhaskar, *kamavisdar* of Kashti, Chandanpuri and Jambgaon was asked to pay rupees 2025 (800+1225) annually to Dewaji Jakhdeo who was appointed as Holkar's *vakil* at the Peshwa's office in Poona.⁸

Tukoji Holkar in 1790 requested Ahilyabai to bestow *Thanedarship* of two or three villages through the *mamlatdar* of Ambad on Yeso Ambajee an old hereditary protégé of the state who had no occupation at present.⁹

Payment demanded from the *kamavisdar* for various types of expenditure made by the Holkar household led to extra pressure on the peasantry. Residents of Mauza Nandgaon in pargana Gandapur made an appeal to Ahilyabai in 1768 against the extra demands made by the local *kamavisdar* as the village had been desolated in the past and seeing the bad condition Malhar Rao had granted it on an

¹ Ibid., No.5/1-3-1767

² Ibid., No.10/12-6-1767

³ Ibid., No.69/10-3-1775

⁴ Ibid., No.71/26-11-1775

⁵ Ibid., No.31, 22-6-1770

⁶ Ibid., No.45/28-9-1771

⁷ Ibid., No.75/2-3-1776

⁸ Ibid., No.194/9-2-1788

⁹ Ibid., No.289/11-8-1790

increasing scale of revenue.¹ But in the last year when the cultivators were to pay 10,000 rupees at the rate of one and half rupee per *bigha*, they were also subjected to extra demand three times during the year of rupees 600, 3000 and 1200 as demanded by the central leadership. This brought hardship to all the cultivators.²

In fact as period advanced demands from central leadership also increased from the local kamavisdars. From early 1760s to early 1780s documents reveals growing financial pressure on local kamavisdars. Further study will reveal whether their revenue collection fell short of these demands or they were well within their collection amount.

Survey of all kamavisdars that one comes across in Holkar state papers right from 1720 to 1797 reveals that appointments for the post of *kamavisdar* were made to persons of Maratha origin only.

<i>Kamavisdar</i>	<i>Pargana</i>	<i>Period</i>
	Katkut	1733
	Bagoda	1733
	Indore	1742
	Kota	1746
Bhivji Baburao	Kalburga	1756
	Patan	1756
Govind Rao Balaji	Rampura	1761
Antaji Narayan	Khasgi land	1761
Manko Girdhar	Khasgi land	1761
Antaji Trimbak/Anandrao Sadashiv	Siur, Dhodalgaon	1762
Babji Prahlad	Sultanpur	1762-67
Satwaji Gaikwad & Vasudev		
Sambhaji	Ambad	1763
Mirja Adil Beg	Depalpur	1765
Krishnaji Tandeo/Trimbak Rajdev	Indore	1765
Mirja Adil Beg	Rampura	1766
	Cholee Taluka	1767
Sadshiv Gopal	Tonk & Rampura	1767
Anandrao Narhar	Devare	1767
Chimanaji Govind	Patan	1767
Krishnarao Govind	Rampura	1767
Vithal Pant	Gaandapur	1768
	Lakhangaon	1768
	(Pabal Pargana)	

¹ Ibid., No.17/19-8-1768

² Ibid., No.17/19-8-1768; *Yaazmude Tamam Ryot Kast Jhali. Konat Bal Rahile Nahin. Aathra Assamiya Modun Ghari Baslya*

Kusaji Mahipatrao	Tarana	1768
Trimbak Baburao	Maheshwar	1769
Dinkar Anant	Chandwad	1770
ShidoTukdev	Mandavgaon	1770
Govind Krishna	Thalner	1770
Dhondo Ballal	Sultanpur	1770
Vyankatrao Kashi	Ambad	1770
Shideshwar Vishnu	KorhaleTaluka	1770
Trimbak Narayan	Devpur	1770
Mahadji Hari	Sevgaon	1770
Khanderao Vyankatesh	Chandwad	1771
	Sakurabad	1771
Visaji Ranganath	Indore	1772
Moro Vinayak	Sevgaon	1773
Khando Sadashiv	Bardawad	1774
Chinto Narayan	Chandwad	1774
	Nimbaheda	1775
Trimbak Baburao	Bijagad	1775-8
Khando Baburao	Indore	1775-95
Magniram Nagnath	Sevgaon	1776
Pandurang Narayan	Bijagad	1778
	Nemawar	1778
Narhar Murar	Kota	1779
Abaji Vishnu	Rampura	1781
Sadashiv Raghunath	Raver	1782
Abaji Vishnu	Thalner	1782
Abaji Vishnu	Rampura	1782
Malhar Soyraiji	Nimbaheda (Udaipur)	1787-90
Sitaram Bhaskar	Kashti, Chandanpuri	1788
Martand Khanderao	Ambad	1788
Chintaman Moreshwar	Pidhawa	1790
Balaji Lakshman	Chnadwad	1790
Narayan Govind	Devale	1792
Lakshman Krishna	Bijagad	1792
Wamanaji Hari	Ambad	1794
Balaji Yadava, Kalyan Mehta	Jhabua	1797

Survey and study of Holkar's *kamavisdars* during Malhar Rao Holkar and Ahilyabai's period reveals that they were regularly transferred from their place of posting. Performance determined their posting at one place. However, there seem to be no uniform law in this regard. Frequent transfers were observed in Rampura where Holkars were trying to assert their position against the Chandrawats as late

as 1796¹ as there was a see-saw battle going on between Holkars and the Chandrawats for control over Rampura. As many as 4 names are mentioned as *kamavisdars* of Rampura in the records: Govinrao Balaji (1761) Mirza Adil Beg (1766), Krishna Rao Govind (1767), Abaji Vishnu(1781,1782) in the period1761-1782.

There were *kamavisdars* who served for several years at a particular place without being transferred. After serving for 20 years as *kamavisdars* (1775-1795) Khando Baburao of Pargana Indore while submitting his account sheet to Ahilyabai wrote, "I am old now and look up to you for protection as my guardian."² But in another cases also, that of *kamavisdar* of Pidhawa successive generations seems to have served in Holkar's government right from1730. In this case of Pidhawa, in 1790 local *kamavisdar* Chintaman Moreshwar wrote to Ahilyabai, "The State has supported my father for sixty years" and desired the same to be continued in future too.³

Some times transfers happened because the state came to realize that a better person could replace the incumbent *kamavisdars* at his position from the view point of better revenue collection. Antaji Trimbak was replaced by Anandrao Sadashiv as *kamavisdars* in Kasbas Siur and Dhodhalgaon and he was asked to make the concern profitable for the Holkars (*sarkar*)by collecting various taxes: *Mal, Sayar, Rahdari, Dandfurohi and Hawaladari*.⁴ In such cases outgoing *kamavisdars* was asked to instruct his successor about the specific duties being assigned to him and challenges he was likely to face in revenue collection work. Trimbak Baburao, *kamavisdars* of Bijagad was was asked in June 1778 to handover charge to Pandurang Narayan with certain minute instructions.⁵

Revenue Farming under Holkars

Reference of only nine *kamavisdars* name between1782-1797 in Holkars state papers compared to the earlier period point towards lesser interaction between state and local *kamavisdars* as the period advanced. Growing incidence of revenue

¹ Ibid., No.434/16-2-1796

² Ibid., No.420/20-4-1795

³ Ibid., No.285/29/6/1790

⁴ Ibid., No.169/1762

⁵ Ibid., No.100/13-6-1778

farming could be the reason as bankers were being assigned territories to cover the loans they were advancing to the state. But instances of revenue farming do appear even in the earlier period of Malhar Rao Holkar when desolated tracks were put to revenue farming by way of *makta* grants.

Instances of revenue farming described as *ijara*, *makta* and *istava makta* in the documents were reported from 1760s only from the territory under Holkars rule in Central India.

Naroji Ballaji was given *mauza* Limbgaon on *makta* (contract) in crown land (*Khasgi*) of the Holkar family in the year 1766 and was to deposit 2500 every year with the local *kamavisdar* of Chandwad, Antaji Trimbak managing the *Khasgi* land.¹

In many cases the contract was assigned for a fixed period. As it happened in the case of the pargana Depalpur where the *makta* agreement was signed for seven years to Trimbakrao Appaj for rupees 799725.² There were cases where it was made for 4 years (*chausala*), 5 years (*panchsala*) and 6 years. The *makta* agreement also carried five broad conditions of taking care of the cultivators (*ryot raji rakhne*), bringing fresh areas under cultivation (*abadi karne*), protecting the area from the damages caused by the troops passing by the territory of Depalpur.³

Often territory assigned in *makta* fell in the area already in the supervision of a *kamavisdar*. As it happened in case of *makta* grant made to Trimbakji Ingle in *mauza* Pedwa under the jurisdiction of Khando Baburao, *kamavisdar* of pargana Indore.⁴

Areas where revenue returns were poor were brought under revenue farming. Pargana Rampura which was prone to disturbances from the very beginning was assigned in *makta* to Krishnaji Sadashiv Chandorkar for 25,000 rupees in 1790 replacing the local Holkar *kamavisdars* Ganapatrao Aaba Gadre. *Kamavisdar's rasad* amount was due with the state and had not been settled so far.⁵

¹ Ibid., No.246/1766

² Ibid., No.33/22-11-1770

³ Ibid., No.33/22-11-1770

⁴ Ibid., No.108/29-1-1779

⁵ Ibid., No.292/28-8-1790; Later Haripant Phadke appealed to Ahilyabai on behalf of Ganapatrao Gadre, as he was removed for no fault, being a difficult area where Chandrawat

During Malhar Holkar's period, a 6 year contract of rupees 2475.2.0 totaling 14850.12.0 rupees made to Naro Balaji of Nimbgaon in *taluka* Kolher, the assignee paid only 9200 rupees by the end of the term of the *makta* grant. In 1762 Malhar Holkar ordered the collection of remaining 5650.12.0 along with an interest of rupees 814.4.0 totaling rupees 6465. In another case Malhar ordered payment of rupees 8336 and 10 *annas* (16 *annas* were equal to one rupee) from Mahadji Ranganath Pimpalaskar for three village that he held in contract for four years (*chausala*) with Ahilyabai Holkar.¹

In some cases of *makta* grants assignee were subjected to increasing scale of revenue. Malharji Holkar assigned *mauza* Dhaare Jalgaon in pargana Sevgaon to Khandojee Kopre on a lease of five years (*panchsala*) for rupees 76001 on an annual increasing scale.² Revenue to be paid each year were as follows:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Annual Amount (Rs)</i>
1173	800
1174	1200
1175	1500
1176	1800
1177	2300

Mauza Nandgaon in pargana Gandapur was in desolated condition due to disturbance created by the troops in the past. Seeing the bad condition of the village Malhar Rao Holkar granted it in contract for five years (*Panchsala Istakbala*) on annual increasing scale as given below to his *kamavisdar*.³

<i>Period</i>	<i>Annual Payment (in Rupees & aana)</i>
1st year	4500
2 nd year	5625
3 rd year	6806-4-0
4 th year	8507-12-0
5 th year	10,000

Rajputs had been resisting Maratha authority in the past too. An appeal was made to consider his case, as he was loyal and his father had also served the state.

¹ Ibid., No.173/10-8-1762

² Ibid., No.195/16-2-1764

³ Ibid., No.17/19-08-1768

Khasgi Grant to Holkars

Khasgi grants were made by Bajirao Peshwa to Malhar Rao Holkar's wife Gautamibai in the year 1734.¹ Areas covered by this grant were located in south Malwa and were worth three lakhs of rupees at that time. It was a revenue free grant and only of its type made by the Peshwa to his sardars. It was treated as crown land by Holkar family. Later Holkars added more villages to it from territories later brought under their control. In the year 1770 Tukoji Rao passed an order to the *kamavisdar* of pargana Nandurbar transferring 18 villages under his *kamavis* to the *khasgi* department and asked him to maintain a separate account for those villages.² Sadashiv Raghunath, *kamavisdars* of pargana Raver was ordered to transfer six villages to *khasgi* Department and they were to be managed by Gangadhar Ballal.³ *Khasgi* land was also administered by appointing *kamavisdars* to collect revenue and look after law and order situation.

Besides land in *saranjam* to sardars and land for revenue collection to *kamavisdars*, all other Holkar officials were paid salary in cash. Even *kamavisdars* were granted a collective amount that included his salary as well as those of all the officials he maintained for accounting work and *sibandis* that kept for maintaining law and order. Trimbak Baburao, a *kamavisdar* of Holkar was allotted rupees 30,000 for all these expenditures in his *kamavis*.⁴ Similarly grant of *mazumdari* in Kota to Trimbak Mukund in 1740 was made on a salary of rupees 400/.⁵ In 1752 *fadnisi* of Pargana Soram, Gangeri and Banchlana was assigned to Damodar Mahadeo Hingane on a salary of rupees 300/.⁶ In 1753 Malhar Rao assigned Karkhandarship of Dhodap fort to Appaji Rama Palsikar on a salary of rupees 900/ and also karkhanadarship of Indragad fort on a salary of rupees 550/.⁷ Sitaram Bhaskar *kamavisdar* of Kashti, Chandanpuri and Jambgaon was asked to pay

¹ Ibid., No.30/20-1-1734

² Ibid., No.35/1770

³ Ibid., No.131/1-2-1782

⁴ Ibid., No.21/30-4-1769

⁵ Ibid., No.49/5-10-1740

⁶ Ibid., No.91/8-12-1752

⁷ Ibid., No.97/18-3-1753; No.100/7-5-1753

rupees 2025/ annually to Dewaji Jakhdeo who was appointed ambassador to the Poona court.¹

Revenue Grants

Both Mughal and later grants made by the Peshwas were continued by Holkar when the territory was assigned to them for revenue collection as *saranjam*. Subhedar Malharji Holkar ordered his *kamavisdar* in 1763 for continuation of the gift of land and money in Pargana Ambad granted by Alamgir Padshah to Abdul Sattar Hakim and Shahabuddin.² Malhar's order addressed to kamavisdars both present and future³

Again in another order issued in the same year Holkar asked the kamavisdars of Pargana Ambad to continue the grant of land and oil made by the *Padshah* for honouring the *Dargah* of Shahaasraf Biyaghane to Sayyad Mohidin and Sayyid Yasin.⁴ Malhar Holkar asked *kamavisdar* of *pargana* Sultanpur in 1763 to continue annual religious grant *varshasan* of *Vedmurti* Vasudev Bhatji Aginhotri Prakashkar⁵ Grant made by Nizam-ul-Mulk was also to be continued. As in 1764 Malhar Rao Holkar ordered the *kamavisdars* of Ambad to uphold the grant of money (four *annas* per householder) to Baba Bhatt, formerly ordered by Nizam-ul-Mulk⁶ The *kamavisdar* of *mauza* Khajrana was ordered by Ahilyabai to continue the gift of 15 Bighas of land to Tarsha *Fakir* for the upkeep etc. of *Peer* Nahar Sayyad as before.⁷

Fresh grants were made too during the period of Holkars to persons of religious merit as well as those engaged in religious functions at places of worship beliefs or performing religious duties at particular places in Holkars territory. In 1761 three Brahmins of *Mauza* Pimplya Rai were granted land where Gautamibai wife of Malhar Rao Holkar breathed her last.⁸ Tukoji Rao Holkar in the capacity of *deshmukh* of *pargana* Chandwad passed a *sanad* for *Varshasan* grant of rupees 100

¹ Ibid., No.194/9-2-1788

² Ibid., No.185/16-10-1763

³ Ibid., No.186/28-10-1763

⁴ Ibid., No.185/28-10-1763

⁵ Ibid., No.178/6-3-1763

⁶ Ibid., No.194/3-2-1764

⁷ Ibid., No.121/15-6-1780

⁸ Ibid., No.163/13-9-1761

from the income of *mauza* Siwadi in pargana Chandwad for supplying food to Brahmins passing through his village *mauza* Anasura.¹

Vasudeo Bhatt Harishchand was gifted land on the death of the late Gautamibai. In 1784 and 1785 orders were passed to the kamavisdars of Indore to continue the gift of land earlier granted in charity as he was not to be hampered in his efforts for agricultural improvements in the granted land that he had undertaken²

Tributary Chiefs under Holkars Territory

Holkar faced problems in tribute collection from the local chieftains who had accepted their supremacy but were left independent in the internal affairs of their estates provided they paid tribute regularly. But Holkar state interfered in Rampura principality as the local chief of Chandrawat clan were not in a mood to submit to Holkars authority. As per Holkar state papers it appears that at one point of time in Rampura, Holkar brought the whole pargana under direct control and made their own arrangement for revenue collection. Holkar officials had either made an assessment themselves or accessed information about total number of villages in Rampura and revenue figures of each village through local officials. In 1761, Pargana Rampura had 519 villages out of which 488 came over to Holkar. Annual revenue three and half lakhs, Laxman Singh Chandrawat was granted 31 villages.³ Later Malharao Holkar assigned Jagir worth ten thousand to Laxmansingh Chandrawat in Rampura pargana. The *kamavisdar* was ordered to make the necessary arrangement in a collective way throughout the pargana⁴

In 1767 Holkar's *kamavisdar* for Rampura Krishna Rao Govind assigned 31 villages to Rampura chief Laxman Singh Chandrawat in four *talukas* Amad, Datoli, Garoth & Pathar.⁵ Total revenue from 31 villages assigned to Chandrawat chief in 4 *talukas* was rupees 50400. The *kamavisdar's* letter mentions village wise breakup of the total revenue figure assigned to Rampura chief as given below:

¹ Ibid., No.112/15-7-1779

² Ibid., No.160/28-10-1784; No.164/29-4-1785

³ Ibid., No.158/13-7-1761

⁴ Ibid., No.162/13-9-1761

⁵ Ibid., No.12/8-9-1767

Taluka : Amad/ 7 villages/Rs13400

5000	Kasbe Majkur	1000	Mauza Data
1500	Badkuwa	1200	Mauza Aarnyamali
2500	Pimpalyapurbicha	1500	Mauza Talau
700	Shamli		

Taluka: Datoli/9villages/Rs12000

4000	Kasba	1000	Mauza Tumbada
600	Khetpalya	800	Mokalpura
1200	Kisanganj	400	Maharajpura
1200	Pokharda	2000	Mauje Pimpalya purohit
800	Khempura		

Taluka: Garothpaiki/4villages/Rs10000

2500	Dhamanyarai	3500	Palasli
2500	Aakali	1500	Shemli Shondhachi

Taluka: Pathar/10 villages/Rs15000

1500	Pagara	700	Pagarkhurd
2000	Pimpalda	5000	Pilkhedibuduk
2000	Pilkhedikurd	1000	Bhimpura
1500	Bisalwas	300	Banjari
500	Amargarh	500	Mokampura

In Far off areas from Holkar headquarter like Kota, Bundi, Khichiwada where Holkar negotiated tribute payment with the local chief from time to time, arrangements made to collect money were not efficient and arrears were the order of the day, tribute payment was not regular, payments were often made under military pressure. There were many local chiefs who violated tribute payment agreements. As Holkar's house started getting weaker local chiefs on the outskirts of Malwa tried to regain their internal autonomy. Khichi chief had ceded Chhabra and Gugar in lieu of tribute to Holkar in 1784 but demanded restoration of these lands, promising to pay the tribute in cash. Ahilyabai asked for full clearance of arrears before relinquishing the two districts. Khichi chief forcibly seized Chhabra and Gugar towns and some other Maratha outposts in March, 1785.¹ Later Shinde laid an attack and overpowered the Khichi chief in 1785-86 after a prolonged siege.

It is interesting to track the fate of Rana of Barwani under Holkars over a period of 75 years (1720-1795). Rana of Barwani in whose armed contingent Malhar Rao Holkar made a start of his famed career and later parted ways due to

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.212

strained relations¹ later became a subject of Malhar Rao Holkar. Rana got weaker and weaker as period advanced. In 1771 Rana appealed to Peshwa against certain acts of Holkar. Sendhwa and Nagalwadi were taken over from Rana's possession. And an elephant was also taken away from Rana's residence.² Rana got weaker and weaker as period advanced. The Poona court made inquiries regarding the Barwani principality – its status and possessions in 1772 from Ahilyabai.³ In 1782 Ahilyabai reprimanded Rana Umed Singh of Barwani for the disturbed condition of his principality and asked him to settle the area under the supervision of her mother.⁴ In 1786 Umed Singh's mother wrote to Ahilyabai about the pitiable condition of her principality as there was disturbance all around and it was getting difficult to settle the area. She sought Ahilyabai's protection.⁵ In 1795 after the death of Rana Umed Singh fort Jalghon belonging to the Barwani state was taken over by Santaji Holkar, though this was disapproved by Ahilyabai Holkar.⁶

In another case of Jhabua too Chimaji Bulye, a sardars under Holkar took possessions of Jhabua chief in 1783 after an attack in which around hundred people died and got injured from both sides. Guns were brought from Indore to attack the place. Jhabua chief left the place.⁷

Holkars correspondences with Jaipur ruler details certain areas in Rajasthan over which Holkar were regularly staking their claim as they formed a part of the deal made at the time of Madho Singh's succession to Jaipur throne, Holkar had demanded these areas (one fourth of the Jaipur territory) for helping the Jaipur ruler against his brother Ishwari Singh. Madho Singh had handed over Rampura to Holkar but possession of Tonk, Malpura remained a contentious issue. Even in case of Rampura which came to Madho Singh as a grant from his uncle the Rana of Udaipur, local chief of Rampura was not willing to come under Holkar's rule and remained defiant through out the period of Holkar's rule. We would discuss more of it while dealing with Holkar's presence in Rajasthan in another chapter.

¹ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.2/1720; *SPD*, Vol.17 No.1/1721

² *Ibid.*, No.44/24-9-1771

³ *Ibid.*, No.52/27-8-1772

⁴ *Ibid.*, No.132/3-2-1782

⁵ *Ibid.*, No.175/31-10-1786.

⁶ *Ibid.*, No.418/22-3-1795

⁷ *Ibid.*, No.156/11-5-1783

Bankers' role in financing Holkar's need for money is evident from a number of instances when Holkar State took loan from local bankers whom Holkar state papers refer as *Sahukars* or *Sowkar*. The bankers generally transacted in promissory notes/bills of exchange known as *Hundis*. Among the bankers whose names appear in connection with money transaction with Holkar are Vishnu Mahdeo Gadre, Piraji Naik Nimbalkar, Khetsi Karamsi, Dinkarrao Anant, Manohar Das Shaugar, Tiloksey Padamsey, Baburao Vishwanath Vaidya, Haripant Jog, Chimanaji Govind. Most of these bankers were not local residents but had links in Maharashtra or Gujarat and started operating soon after Holkar state took root in the Central India region.

In 1743 Malhar Rao Holkar exhorted the Indore kamavisdars to induce outside merchants and *sowkars* to come and stay at Indore.¹ Again in 1747 Malhar Rao Holkar exhorted the Indore *kanungo* to see that merchants and bankers from Ujjain and the surrounding territory came to stay at Indore and made the *kasba* prosperous. And his wishes were more than fulfilled as Indore had a good number of bankers operating from the city; there was a union of bankers called *Panch Sowkars* referred in document of 1789.² They often acted in unison to sort out matters concerning the bankers' lot in *kasba* Indore and called themselves *Panch Sowkar* of *Kasba* Indore. Seth Nanabhai, Tiloksey Padamsey, Gangaram Kewalram, Lalaji Shevakram, Bhagoti Magan, Manakchand Hirachand were members of this bankers' union in 1789.³

Most of the money transactions involved bankers right from the beginning. In emergency Holkar arranged money on the frontiers during the campaigns from the bankers and paid later from the reserves at the headquarter with an interest. In 1764 Pirajee Naik Nimbalkar arranged a loan of rupees 1.5 lakh for Malhar Rao Holkar at 1.5 per cent interest per month.⁴ Malhar Rao Holkar borrowed rupees two lakhs on the spot from Khetsey Karamsey at the time of launching a campaign against the Gohad Jats in March 1766 and asked Ahilyabai to pay the amount of

¹ Ibid., No.59/7-1-1743

² Ibid., No.242/20-9-1789

³ Ibid., No.242/20-9-1789

⁴ Ibid., No.196/22-3-1764

the *sowkar* in Indore without delay.¹ Khetsy Padamsey of Indore issued a *hundi* of rupees 75,000 towards payment of Holkar's dues to the Peshwa government.²

With Holkar state's economic position becoming unstable during the later part of the second half of 18th century, bankers' role in State affairs was on the rise. Holkars began to rely heavily on bankers towards the end of the 18th century to finance the on going military campaigns in the North. Tukoji Holkar passed a bond of rupees 102001 to Tiloksey Padamsey at the rate of 24 per cent interest. The debt was incurred for paying the army.³ Tukoji Holkar in 1788 on the eve of his march to North to assist Mahadji Shinde, after the Lalsot debacle informed Ahilyabai saying, "Padamsey was with her at Maheshwar and without seeing him and without making monetary arrangements, he won't be in a position to proceed."⁴ A week later Tukoji again wrote, "The amount from Padamsey has been all apportioned to various past payments and future arrangements. He is now with you. I can not leave this spot without seeing the said banker. Please send him early."⁵ Again in 1795, when Holkar were facing grave challenges Ahilyabai asked his official Ganpatrao Narayan to have courage and take some *sowkars* (bankers) to Tukoji so that their preparation for the war were at par with those of others.⁶

As Holkar state's expenditure far exceeded income towards the later period, bankers were assigned territories to recover loans that they advanced to the Holkar State. In such cases often the bankers faced resistance from the previous grantee in collection of revenue from the assigned tracts. Pargana Piploda was assigned to a banker from Indore; Tiloksey Padamsey but Holkar's sardar Govindrao Mahadik was still collecting money from zamindars. In 1791 Ahilyabai passed an order confirming the grant of territory to the banker and asked Govindrao Mahadik to be present on his duty and let Padamsey collect his own due.⁷

Similarly when Tukoji Holkar's urgent demand for money was conveyed to Ahilyabai, she sent *hundi* to relieve him of his distressed position. The *sowkar* issuing the *hundi* was to recover the amount out of revenue of Khandesh *mahals*

¹ Ibid., No.251/21-3-1766

² Ibid., No. 26/1769

³ Ibid., No.171/22-2-1786

⁴ Ibid., No.203/10-7-1788

⁵ Ibid., No.204/17-7-1788

⁶ Ibid., No.416/January 1795

⁷ Ibid., No.322/19-1-1791

under Holkar's authority.¹ But besides the normal practice, in 1797 the state also asked *kamavisdar* of Jhabua to pay the amount of bill made in the name of banker Padamsey Rajsey from the revenue of the pargana.²

Bankers even chose to support Ahilyabai's philanthropic acts. Ahilyabai received rupees 3,000 from Tiloksey Padamsey for providing the alms-house at Pandharpur.³

Internal Functioning of Shindes Household State
Shindes Revenue Collection from Ujjain and other possessions in Malwa

Ujjain became Shindes headquarter in 1731 and remained so till early 1780s, Gwalior was won and lost several times before it became Shindes new headquarter in 1816.⁴ Shindes had Kota and Mathura as their bases for military operations and to control their possessions in Rajasthan and Delhi -Agra region.

Ujjain then also known as Avantika became the halting place for most of the North bound travellers; Kota was the next station of Shindes men on way to Hindustan and Rajasthan where they were trying to extend their presence through regular campaigns.⁵ Shinde shifted their headquarter to Laskar near Gwalior only from 1816 even though it served as a Maratha military base right from mid 18th century but remained a hotly contested stronghold through out the 18th century.

Ujjain being located much down south in Malwa had also served as Malwa suba headquarter during the Mughal period and thus had all infrastructure to serve as Shindes administrative centre. Traders and Bankers had conducted business from here for long and mints were also operated from this place only. During Shindes period their kamavisdars sent their return (*Bharna*) to Ujjain from where major administrative works were coordinated. People injured in the battle were sent here as well. All supplies were sent from Ujjain to desired locations after manufacturing them. While going to Hindustan from Poona, Ujjain became the halting places for most of the North bound travellers. Kota became the next

¹ Ibid., No.377/11-4-1792

² Ibid., No.445/29-6-1797

³ Ibid., No.375/1-5-1792

⁴ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, Phalke, A. B., Gwalior, 1929, p.75

⁵ Ibid.,

station/base of Shindes men on way to Hindustan and Rajasthan. Kota assumed the function of another base in the North, from the early 1740s onwards.¹

Areas in and around Ujjain were firmly under Shindes control as they began to regularly halt here while returning from their military campaigns during the rainy season. It was threatened only for a brief period just after the battle of Panipat.² In the beginning Shindes control extended up to a distance of 60 *kos* (120 miles/192kms) from Ujjain. After Panipat local zamindars asserted their position and tried to wrest the territory on the outskirts of Ujjain. But soon after Shinde's men recaptured and settled the area under Maratha officials.³ Except for a few years of internal disturbance due to succession dispute in the Shinde family which coincided with the Jat upheaval in the North-Eastern Malwa from 1762-3 to 1768, Ujjain and its suburbs remained firmly under control and settled for the rest of Mahadji Shindes period of rule.

That Ujjain and its suburbs was settled and generating good revenue even later in the 1770s and further up to 1790s is proved from correspondences during the Patan and Merta. In 1790, Shinde's camp at Mathura reported receiving of a *hundi* of rupees 2 lakhs from the *amils* of Ujjain and the fact that more was expected from that side.⁴ Moreover, at that time Mahadji was seeking a loan of 20 lakhs from Aba Nayak Seth and other bankers on assignment of the income of the Ujjain *mahals* to bail him out from the financial crisis, which further confirms Ujjain as fully regulated by Shinde's revenue collectors in those days.⁵

Beyond Ujjain, during the 1730s, evidence of Shindes occupation and evidence of making arrangements for collection of revenue by appointing *kamavisdar* comes from Rajgarh in the north-west which lay in between Ujjain and Kota. In 1733 Ragho Vithal was *kamavisdar* of Rajgarh and Ranoji wrote to him in December 1733 about appointment of Ragho Govind to work as his *fadnis*.⁶

Beyond Ujjain, Shindes territories in Central India after the division of Malwa territories made in 1732 by the Peshwa were mostly located in north-west

¹ Ibid.

² Rajadhyaksha, N. V., *op.cit.*, p.47

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar, p.35

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, L.1/26-12-1733

Malwa. Holkar's official document of 1777 lists parganas under Shinde's control along with the revenue figures during the period 1776-77. By then Shindes were collecting revenue from Rajgarh, Ratlam, Kachrod, Mandsor, Khilchipur, Sitamau, Kayampur near Ujjain, Kayeth, Shahjapur, Amjhera, Barwani, all these parganas were located in the 60 kos range from Ujjain, Shindes headquarter. In these parganas of Shinde works of revenue collection through *kamavisdars* seems to have progressed without any major disturbance after Mahadji Shinde took over in the 1768.

Holkar's official document shows some of the highest revenue collection figures recorded from Ujjain and the neighbouring parganas which lay in the vicinity of Ujjain & Kota during the period 1776-77. Rajgarh and Khilchipur are shown as generating rupees 8,00,000 in revenue, highest amongst Shinde's parganas.¹ Next to it were Ujjain, Kachrod, Mandsor and Navlai with rupees 3,00,000. These last mentioned adjoining territories just south-west of Khilchipur - Rajgarh made Shinde's north-west possessions in Malwa. Thus 20 lakhs out of total revenue of rupees 28 were being generated from these 5 parganas in 1776-1777.²

Shindes *jagirs* with their revenue figures from each pargana in 1776-77 were as follows.³

<i>Pargana</i>	<i>Revenue in Rupee</i>
Ujjain Mahal	3,00,000
Kachrod Mahal	3,00,000
Navlai Mahal	3,00,000
Ratlam	1,00,000
Amjhera	3,40,000
Mandsor	3,00,000
Kayampur (near Ujjain)	1,00,000
Unhel	50,000
Pan Bihar	54,000
Badod Mahal	3,60,000
Shahjapur	1,54,000
Rajgarh Khilchipur	8,00,000
Nevari Bhawarasha	54,000
Jhalor Barode	64,000
Toke(Tonk?)	40,000

¹ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.90/1776-1777

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.,

Dhargaon	34,000
Baghbare	8,000
Nemawar	12,000
Nimemorahsod	22,000
Patankeshavrai	60,000
Gangli	15,000
Daud	42,000
Sagordigthan	40,000
Punase Sikri	15,000
Pawagad	1,00,000
Badwai (Barwani?)	40,000
Ajmer	1,00,000
	<hr/>
	28, 00,000

By 1776-77 Shindes territorial expansion in Central India had reached its limit and campaigns were in progress in outlying areas beyond the Chambal river to acquire new areas in Rajasthan and Doab beyond the existing Maratha line of control.

Beyond Central India, Shinde didn't possess much in *Doab* in the initial phases. Rajasthan became their main target during the 1750s. Malhar Holkar led the campaign in the *Doab* region during that period. In case of Shinde only later after the Anglo- Maratha war their territorial acquisitions in *Doab* areas were substantial as Mughal Emperor granted Shinde the authority to handle administration in those areas on his behalf. Mahadji assigned 52 parganas in *Doab* to his European generals as their *jaidad*. These were located near Aligarh.

*Gulgule : Kota Kamavisdar as Pivot of Shindes Network in
Malwa & Rajasthan*

After Ujjain and its neighbouring parganas in the north and west it was Kota in Rajasthan lying just North of Ujjain which emerged as a Maratha centre in the 1730s and 1740s. Kota became prominent due to its crucial location on Malwa - Rajasthan border, just beyond the Mukundra Pass - the principal gateway into Rajasthan those days. Marathas made Kota their operational base right from the early 1730s when they started campaigning in Rajasthan.

Maratha representative Balaji Yashwant Gulgule who was posted at Kota in 1733 to act as revenue collector later emerged as a crucial person who coordinated revenue collection and settlement work and also handled Shinde's affairs in Mewar, Jaipur, Kota, Bundi and even in north-western Malwa. All administrative

orders for the local Kamavisdars posted in the Kota region both within Malwa and in neighbouring Rajasthan were implemented by the office of Kota *vakil* and *kamavisdar* Gulgule right from the early 1740s.

Gulgule family's role in management of Maratha revenue and political arrangements in the Kota region especially pertaining to Shinde family have attracted the attention of historians who have assessed the value of Shindes correspondences left behind in this family. The vast mass of correspondences left behind by them holds the key to details on Maratha expansion in the North. "The ancestors of this Saraswat Brahmin family sir named Gulgule came from Achare in the South Konkan and were placed by the Peshwa at Kotah as revenue collectors, under the orders of Shinde."¹

As Jadunath Sarkar says, "During the first stages of the Maratha occupation of Malwa under the great Baji Rao I a Saraswat Brahman named Balaji Yashwant Gulgule of the Ratnagiri District has come as a civil officer in the train of the Maratha invaders in 1733. When the Gwalior territory and the neighbouring parts of Rajputana were assigned to Shinde as his special sphere, Gulgule became his revenue collector and agent (*kamavisdar* and *vakil*) at Kotah. His son Lalji Ballal Gulgule, who succeeded to the office in 1760, continued to act for more than 40 years afterwards as an important pivot of Maratha affairs in Central India"²

G S Sardesai making an estimate of Gulgule papers says, "The letters in Gulgule *Daftar* will come to 6,000, half of which may deserve being printed fully.... How the Marathas expanded into Rajputana, what sort of relations they kept with the Rajput Princes, what difficulties they encountered and how they overcame them all. All this was the work of one great personality Mahadji Shinde whose life work from 1761 to his death in 1794, is fully exemplified in the copious letters sent from his camps."³

Further Sardesai says, "Kotah records give the version of Mahadji Shinde against the earlier existing version of Nana Phadnavis and his partisans. This Kotah *Daftar* is complete and intact right from the beginning of Maratha entry into North to its ultimate settlement under the British supremacy in the first quarter of 19th century. We find ample material for estimating the various stages of Maratha

¹ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, See G S Sardesai's remarks, p.5

² J N Sarkar, *Foreword to Selection from the Peshwa Daftar*, Bombay, 1933, p.4

³ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhane*, Vol.1, See G S Sardesai's remarks, p.5

expansion into the North, its policy and methods. Its financial facilities and burdens, difficulties and encounters and the kind of relations existing between the Marathas and the Rajputs. Kotah was long the pivot round which the Maratha policy in Rajputana centred during and previous to the regimes of Mahadji and Daulat Rao Shinde.”¹

Gulgule records bring to light how Shindes made revenue collection in and around Kota under the supervision of Balaji Yashwant Gulgule. Gulgule served as Shindes *kamavisdar* of Kota from 1732 and later also as his *vakil* in Kota ruler's court. His son Lalaji Ballal Gulgule succeeded him in the same position in 1760 and continued right up to the end of the 18th century.

In 1732 under Peshwa's orders the work of *fadnis* was first assigned to Gulgule, later on basis of good performance, Gulgule was also made *kamavisdar* of Shinde's *prant*.²

Major success for Balaji Gulgule came in 1737-38 when he stopped Kota ruler Durjansal from joining Mughal forces during the Battle of Bhopal and established friendly relations between Marathas & Kota ruler. In reward he was given 700 *bigha* of land in Kota as *inam* (Chak Udak). *Mauza* Birakhedi in Pargana Urmala was assigned to Gulgule.³ Perhaps happy with his efforts Shinde on 24th February 1738 assigned him the job of *vakil* as well. Kota chief was the most important local elite Shinde was then directly dealing with, among other chiefs with whom he was dealing around this time (1739) were Amjhera, Khilchipur, Chanderi, Datia, Bundi, Rajgarh, Sitamau and Seopur.⁴

Kota in the beginning was the joint assignment of Peshwa and his sardars Shinde, Holkar and Pawar and Gulgule was to look after this joint assignment.⁵ Areas from which Marathas were to collect revenue were Kota, Khairabad Bakani and Bhilwadi. Total revenue assessment from Kota in 1744 was rupees 88,000, maximum revenue accruing from Kota proper was 75,100 rupees.⁶ Shindes share was 30,113 rupees.

¹ Ibid., pp.5-6

² *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, p.3, See *Ranoji Shinde Yancha Asal Patra Vyavahar*,

³ Ibid.,

⁴ Ibid., p.4

⁵ Ibid., L.20/24-5-1744

⁶ Ibid.,

As Shindes expanded their revenue collection machinery by appointing a network of Kamavisdars in the Kota region both within Malwa and in Rajasthan, Gulgule was asked to supervise and co-ordinate with the newly appointed Kamavisdars and their lower officials (*fadnis*). Gulgule was instructed by Jayaji Shinde to guide the kamavisdars in works of settlement freshly allotted areas; extension of agricultural work in desolated villages was to be encouraged by bringing back peasants, stopping disturbances by local zamindars was another responsibility. Gulgules responsibility thus began to rise as Shinde started operating on much wider scale in the Kota region as the period progressed. This arrangement by Shinde beyond Ujjain relieved their leadership from day to day handling of their affairs on both sides of Kota and allowed them to concentrate on their military campaigns further North and in the *Doab* region that Ranojis sons were then involved in.

Thus neighbouring Piplauda and Kirwad parganas under *sarkar* Ranthambor were assigned by Shinde to his *kamavisdar* Shankaraji Raghunath in 1743.¹ Gulgule was asked to coordinate with him and also with the ruler of Kota in this regard.² Next year Shankaraji Raghunath was also assigned Indragad and Khatoli and Gulgule was again asked to see that good relations prevailed between the Kota *Maharao* and the new *kamavisdar* and also to supervise the settlement of the area recently assigned to him. By this time a local named Madhoram Tiwari was asked by Ranoji Shinde to work with Gulgule.³

Two years later Naro Vithal was appointed *kamavisdar* of pargana Patan Keshori in Bundi territory.⁴ Gulgule was again asked to support the efforts of Patan *kamavisdar* and his *fadnis* Jivaji Anant who would actually co-ordinate and write to him from Patan.⁵ Gulgule was asked to take care of Patan and do all to settle the area in co-ordination with Patan's *kamavisdar* because of the disturbed situation there due to ongoing tussle between Kota Maharao and Bundi ruler Umed Singh.⁶ On another occasion Jayaji Shinde asked Gulgule to coordinate rehabilitation work

¹ Ibid., L.13/27-12-1743

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., L.15/January 1744 & L.24/10-3-1745

⁴ Ibid., L.36/24-6-1745

⁵ Ibid., L.38/30-7-1745

⁶ Ibid., L.38/30-7-1745 & L.39/9-08-1745

in desolated villages (*Mauje* Dubalana) by encouraging the local *ryots* to settle such villages and also to stop disturbances created by the Meenas and other local elements.¹

In Kota problems of non-payment of revenue and disturbances from local elements led Shinde to assign certain tracts like Shergarh and other areas in contract for purpose of revenue collection from very early period.²

Due to exaggerated demands payments from Kota became irregular from the year 1746. New agreements seem to have been made in 1747 to pay rupees 16 lakhs as *khandni* or tribute for the years 1746, 1747 and 1748 as per agreement.³ However, as time passed Kota ruler began to default in payment of this tribute amount. Attempt to satisfy Shinde led to issuance of *hundis* in the name of Aurangabad traders that were many times not honoured or there was heavy discount charged on them.⁴

Gulgule was now regularly being asked to supervise settlement of Patan and Kaparan as it seems the area was disturbed and Maratha *kamavisdar* was not able to manage the revenue collection work there.⁵ Jayaji Shinde also began putting pressure on Gulgule to collect revenue by all means from Kota.⁶ But the problem of payment from Kota worsened for Shinde in the later years. In 1751 there was one years backlog⁷ but there was a big jump in demand also, as amount being demanded now was rupees 16 lakhs.⁸ There were repeated messages from Jayaji to Gulgule to do all that was possible to get money from Kota *faujdar* Akhairam.⁹ In the month of August Jayaji asked Gulgule to also coordinate payment from Jaipur and accused Kota *faujdar* for making promises and then

¹ Ibid., L.40/September 1745

² Ibid., L.47/7-2-1746 ... कोटेकरानी जागा जागा तनखा करून दिल्ली आहे...; L.53/4-8-1746 ... भोपतराम याज बाा सेरगढ पांते गेलो हेतो जागा जागा वराता दिल्या होत्या त्यापैकी जो वसूल जाला तो वरचेवर उजनीस पावितो

³ Ibid., L.58/3-2-1747

⁴ Ibid., L.64/13-7-1747; L.70/21-12-1747

⁵ Ibid., L.67/11-10-1747; L.68/Nov 1747

⁶ Ibid., L.75/21-6-1748 ... तुम्ही कोटेकरासी साम दाम दंड भेद करून ज्या पमाणे राजश्री अखेराजी करार करून गेले आहेत त्या पमाणे वसूल करणे

⁷ Ibid., L.86/3-6-1751

⁸ Ibid., L.88/3-6-1751

⁹ Ibid., L.90/18-6-1751

turning away, declaring him to be a liar, still he wanted Gulgule to do all possible to get the amount from Kota.¹ In June 1752 Kota had not paid two years revenue to Shinde. Certainly Shinde was getting desperate with the non-payment as cajoling Akhairam Pancholi by Kota *vakil* was not producing any result and Shinde was thinking of personally visiting Kota to collect the dues in the beginning of 1752.²

Disturbances and low returns probably forced Jayaji to withdraw Govind Sakhaji as Patan's *kamavisdars* in 1755 and assigned the area to Gulgule in *ijara* for 4 years on an increasing scale.³

Payment schedule drawn for next four years for Patan were

1755	210001
1756	210001
1757	212001
1758	215001

The payment each year were to be made in three instalments as follows

<i>Amount</i>	<i>Month</i>
40001	Magh Last
80000	Baishakh Last
90000	Shrawan Last

Collection work at Patan was to be handled by appointing an official Ramaji Jagannath who was to locally present there and assist Gulgule in taking control over collection work from Kota.⁴ Three Maratha officials who were posted there were retained by the orders of Jayaji Shinde and were to be paid 800 rupees as salary as follows.⁵

<i>Salary</i>	<i>Officials</i>
300	Balaji Narsingh
250	Baburao Gunaji
250	Chinto Narayan Kashtikar Kotwal

¹ Ibid., L.92/4-8-1751, ... करारा पोा देतात अगर नाही देत याचा कसा काय विचार तो लेहून पाठवावे यैवज देत असतील तर तेथे रहावे नाही तर तेथे हकनाहक पयेोजन काय आहे ...तशीसारखी पैरवी करणे ते केली जाईल...

; also see L.94/28-5-1751; L.95/1-1-1752; L.96/10-3-1751

² Ibid., L.95/1-1-1752

³ Ibid., L.120/12-7-1752

⁴ Ibid., L.123/9-1-1755

⁵ Ibid., L.124/9-1-1755

As time passed Gulgule was relieved from the management of Peshwa, Holkar and Pawar's tracts in Kota and focused more on Shindes affairs in the region. In 1743 Krishnaji Govind came to Kota to manage Holkar's holdings in Kota.¹ In 1748 Pawar appointed his *kamavisdar* Krishnaji Tandeo.²

Another very significant duty of Kota *vakil* was to get traders carrying items of trade a passage through Kota without much trouble about paying road tax, *zakat* levied by each state on their state borders.³ One comes across regular demand for horses and camels from Shinde family⁴ as well as Peshwa's court.⁵

In matters relating to Udaipur state too Shinde relied on Gulgule and Kota's *faujdar* Jhala Zalim Singh's to sort out their matters with Mewar leadership.⁶

So as the period progressed Kota *vakil*'s role in Shinde's management of Maratha affairs grew far and wide. When a particular *kamavisdar*'s performance dipped Gulgule was asked to personally handle the *kamavisdars* job in that particular pargana. In 1786 Lalaji Ballal Gulgule was also asked to take over as *kamavisdar* of Raghogarh from Maloji Ingle, the existing *kamavisdars* and asked to settle the pargana and collect revenue by cajoling the zamindars to pay revenue.⁷ He was also being sent to Mewar to deal with Shindes *mamlat* in Ranas territory.⁸

So what comes out of the study of the Gulgule papers in the first two decades of Maratha stay in the Kota region is that Shindes *kamavisdars* had taken to revenue assessment and collection work of which there is clear confirmation from as early as 1743, according to the letters written by Shinde to his representative Gulgule.⁹ In the same year local *kamavisdar* reported dispatch of a *hundi* worth 27,000 rupees to Ranoji Shinde confirming.

However, non-payment of dues by Kota ruler and disturbances by local zamindars were also reported. In a letter dated 9th August 1745 Jayaji Shinde asks

¹ Ibid., See footnote on p.65

² Ibid., L.82/10-9-1748

³ Ibid., L.13/29-2-1744

⁴ Ibid., L.4/24-11-1742; L.5/8-12-1742

⁵ Ibid., L.5/8-12-1742

⁶ *Gulgule Daftar*, Vol.6, No.51/1786

⁷ Ibid., No.18/30-4-1786

⁸ Ibid., No.51/1786

⁹ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, L.8/20-6-1743; L.921-6-1743; L.10/14-10-1743; L.11/14-12-1743; L.12/15-12-1743; L.13/27-12-1743

local official Jiwaji Anant to make all effort to maintain peace in Patan so that local people don't run away.

Shindes tried to bring back normalcy by promoting rehabilitation of *ryots* and extension of agricultural work in desolated villages. Jayaji instructed Gulgule to resettle desolated areas in Patan and Kaparan lying in its neighborhood. He instructed Gulgule to take measures for the safety of the area from future attacks of the local zamindars. In case of another village Dublana in the neighbourhood of Kota, in the same year Jayaji wrote to Balaji Yashwant Gulgule asking him to encourage local *ryots* to resettle in the villages. Shinde also advised Gulgule to stop disturbances created by Meenas in those villages. In a letter dated 3rd October 1745 he again prevailed upon Gulgule to resettle desolated villages of Patan, Kaparan and Dubalana destroyed by Umed Singh of Bundi. Jayaji called for extension of agriculture work which would mean regular flow of money from those villages to Shinde's treasury.

What one gathers from Marathi and Rajasthani records is that Marathas especially Shinde sourced horses and camels from Rajasthan quite regularly from the very beginning of their arrival at Kota. Even in the later periods demand for horses and camels didn't stop.¹ Shinde made it a point to write to Kota *vakil* to try for remission of road tax *zakat/mahsul*. Shinde also wrote to Jaipur ruler not to levy *mahsul* from his traders.² This was certainly on basis of their dominant position in Rajasthan vis -a- vis the Jaipur ruler.

At the same time the opposition to Maratha rule in Central India especially on the outskirts was a widespread event. Along with the local elite who had come under the direct purview of the Marathas and whose acts of defiance were likely to be accounted for and so were often restrained, but the smaller *zamindars* and cultivators were opposing Maratha presence. In Gulgule records of the later period from the Raghogarh area belonging to Khichi Rajputs it is found that cultivators in the villages too oppose Marathas presence. In neighboring Rajgarh area local Maratha ally Rawat Hamir Singh faced opposition from one Kaluram Khichi who was capable of instigating villagers against Hamir Singh and the Maratha revenue collectors. Similarly in another area belonging to Peshwa in the jurisdiction of

¹ See the Fifth Chapter in this thesis: "Maratha Power Beyond Central India"

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.19, MargashirBadi4, 1828/1771; *Gwalior Kharita* No.23, Bhadon Badi 10, 1829/1772; *Gawalior Kharita* No.25, Magh Sudi14, 1829/1772

Kota *vakil* local *zamindars* of pargana Aarun and Shahadora opposed establishment of Maratha *thanas* by operating against them from their fortified residences called *garhis*.¹

Territories Annexed from Tributary Chiefs

Beyond the hinterlands of Indore and Ujjain there were local chiefs with whom Marathas had tributary relation after the conquest of Malwa. However, as time passed many of these chiefs defaulted on payment and part of their domain was attached and brought under direct control of the local Maratha official. In Sitamau state Shinde brought a part of its territory under direct control when the local Rathor chief began to default on payments of revenue. Similar cases are reported even from chiefs paying tribute to Holkar and Peshwa. Even in Rajasthan often in lieu of tribute territories were offered to Marathas as it happened during the negotiations with the Jodhpur ruler after the battle of Merta in 1790.

Soon after the Marathas were conferred with the *subadari* of Malwa in 1741. Sitamau ruler agreed to pay 35,000 rupees circulated in Ujjain region in tribute to the Marathas. As the collection of tribute was not proper from Aalot subdivision in Sitamau, Pawars took it under their direct control and Sitamau ruler Gaj Singh visited Aalot and Susner to sort out this matter but due to bad economic condition of Sitamau he was unable to arrange the amount of tribute and so in 1733-34 Aalot pargana was lost by Gaj Singh to the Marathas.

The death of Gaj Singh on 10th July, 1752 at Ujjain led to succession of Fateh Singh his son on the seat of power. He was facing the onslaught of the Marathas and was also paying the tribute amount of 35,000 rupees and possessed only Sitamau and Nahargarh *mahals*. In 1753 due to difficulty in the payment of tribute Jayappa Shinde's officials captured Nahargarh *mahal*² further plunging the economic situation of the Sitamau state into graver position. In the last months of 1753 Fateh Singh decided to meet Jayappa Shinde to solve his problem.³ He complained about collection of more than fixed amount from his men and about the ongoing extortions and loot and encroachment over Nahargarh *mahal* by his officials. But this didn't do much of good rather in January 1754 Jayappa raised the

¹ *Gulgule Daftar*

² Barhat, Shivdatt Dan, *Sitamau Rajya ka Itihas*, Sitamau, 2002, pp.51-52

³ *Ibid.*, p.52

amount to be collected from Sitamau to rupees 41500 per annum. Thus Nahargarh was separated from Sitamau for ever and now from Sitamau only Fateh Singh had to collect and pay 41,500 rupees.¹ Period between 1754 to 1761 passed peacefully as Marathas were busy elsewhere in the North. However, due to non-payment of tribute afterwards, as Nahargarh *mahal* was lost now, Sitamau came in the list of the states having dues, called as *bakidars*. When Mahadji Shinde took over he instructed his officials to collect dues from states including Sitamau. His officials in Mandsor started putting pressure on Fateh Singh. In 1769 Maratha officials collected *Kakuni* cess. Harji Baji collected 700 rupees and Gopal Rao Bhagwant collected 90 rupees from Sitamau city. This was extra amount collected besides the annual tribute. This affected local agriculture and trade. Fateh Singh reported this matter to Mahadji Shinde but he didn't respond.²

Similar was the case with Chanderi in north-east Malwa which was under Peshwas direct supervision. Certain tracts were surrendered by the Raja of Chanderi in lieu of their annual tribute of 30,000 rupees in the year 1766-67.³

In Holkar's case too the "Khichi ruler of Raghogarh had ceded Chhabra (30miles west of Guna) and Gugar in lieu of tribute to Holkar."⁴ "But in 1784 Khichi ruler demanded the restoration of these lands, promising to pay the tribute in cash. Ahilyabai, asked for full clearance of arrears before relinquishing the two districts."⁵ The Khichi chief then forcibly seized these two towns and some other Maratha posts that side in March 1785 leading to Mahadji Shindes intervention and prolonged siege of Khichi principality and consequent establishment of Shindes control over Khichiwada.⁶

In Rajasthan this practice of demanding territories in case of failure in payment of tribute and other demands too caught up during the supremacy of Mahadji Shinde. In 1790-91 after the defeat in the Battle of Merta, Jodhpur State unable to fulfill Maratha demands for cash payment, contemplated parting with some portions of their territory and held talks in this regard with Shinde's *karbhari*

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p.54

³ *SSRPD*, Peshwa Mahdahavrao I, Vol.1, No.290/1766-67

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, p.212

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Abaji Raghunath Chitnis.¹ In lieu of *fauji-kharch* dues of rupees 40 lakhs Sambhar, Didwana and Nawa territories were decided to be handed over to Mahadji Shinde.²

There was regular correspondence between Kota *kamavisdar* and *vakil* Gulgule and Shinde chiefs. After Ranoji's death in 1745 this was much more evident in the correspondences of Jayappa known as Jayaji Shinde. Just after taking over as Shinde chief, Jayaji asked Gulgule as to why he hadn't mentioned shares of Peshwa and their own in the report earlier sent. Shinde also informed Gulgule about *hundis* sent from Kota that were not honoured.³

Ruler of smaller Rajput principalities like Sitamau under Mandsor *pargana* complained to Mahadji Shinde against excessive taxation. In 1781, Sitamau ruler Fateh Singh was captured by Maratha forces and kept in custody for three years. Later when released, to show his opposition to Maratha rule he minted coins in his own name, after Maratha debacle at Lalsot in 1787. However, he was scared of Marathas and shifted his residence to a safer location when Maratha forces started harassing him.

More than revenue collection work in tracts controlled by Shinde sometimes even disputes among the local residents were settled through the local *kamavisdar*. In 1753, Govardhan Bin Ramchand Chaudhri, local resident of *pargana* Susner under Sarangpur *sarkar* in Malwa under Shinde's jurisdiction lodged a complaint against fellow resident Devchand for creating trouble for him for the last ten years.⁴ Jayaji Shinde appointed a *panchayat* consisting of local *kamavisdars* Harbajiram of *pargana* Badod, Ramaji Dadaji of *pargana* Khilchipur, Girmaji Jivaji of *pargana* Soyat, Bohra Sahukar Lala Bhikaridas Dimat Lal and Jivaji Narsingh Kulkarni.⁵

Administration and Revenue Collection in Doab under Mahadji Shinde's European Generals

Among various kinds of local arrangements that Shinde and Holkar implemented to extract revenue from local elements none was as successful as

¹ *Marwad-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, Parampara, Vol.93-94, Jodhpur, 1990, L.19/18-1-1791

² *Ibid.*, L.15/2-11-1790; L.16/1-12-1790; L.17/1-12-1790; L.18/18-1-1791; L.19/18-1-1791; was Jodhpur allotting these areas in contract, what the term *pete* is being used for is suggestive of that.

³ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, L.36/20-7-1745

⁴ *Ibid.*, L.107/27-10-1753

⁵ *Ibid.*,

those adopted by Shindes European generals in the *Doab* and Mewat territories. What one gathers from the contemporary European accounts bears all characters of a well laid out administrative arrangement, something that Shinde could implement at few places like the Ujjain *mahal* described earlier in this chapter and also at Kota.

Shinde encountered recurring problems in payment of troops in North India especially after the First Anglo-Maratha War when he embarked on his mission to raise a European style contingent of troops for his army and further reforms in his army that followed in the subsequent period. Earlier the recruits in the Deccani army of the Maratha sardars had three categories of troops- *Bargir*, *Shiledar* and *Shibandi*. *Bargirs* were soldiers using state equipment.¹ Just, opposite was the case of *Shiledar*, they were the hired troopers having their own horse, arms and equipments. On the other hand *Shibandis* were untrained auxiliary force, they could be foreign or allied troops hurriedly assembled to face an emergency situation or to man a Maratha outpost (*thana*) in the conquered territory after the main army had moved out of that location. Their equipments and supplies became the responsibility of state especially in case of prolonged warfare² Maratha sardars had advantage of demobilizing the *Shibandis* when they were not needed so they did not need regular payment. *Shiledars* too were self financed only their salary was paid from the state treasury. Only the *bargirs* were equipped and paid by the state or Maratha *sardar* for whom they worked. To them generally a small amount of advance money was given before a campaign by their chief for the purchase of horses, arms and ammunition etc. known as *nalbandi*.

But in case of European battalions that Shinde asked De Boigne to raise in 1783 the case was much different; this regular troop formation basically divided in to infantry and artillery, were daily drilled and were commanded by hierarchy of ranked officers, each looking after a unit such as a Platoon, a Battalion or a Brigade or even a much smaller unit under ranked officers a Captain, a Major, a Lt Colonel or a Colonel. Such an arrangement required regular pay to soldiers and

¹ Molesworth Dictionary defines *Bargir* as a trooper that is mounted and equipped by the chief or state that employed them

² *SPD* (New Series), P M Joshi (ed.), Vol.3, No.144/28 -2-1768, the document refers to the Pathans of Gwalior in Maratha service & No.154/2-6-1768 mentions rupees 8000 to be paid to the *Shibandis* in Maratha army at the time of Jat movements in north eastern Malwa and Bundelkhand in 1768

their officers commanding them. Moreover, the troops used standard equipment which had to be mass produced with strict specifications. The infantry used guns and their bullets that were especially manufactured as per the European standards desired by the European generals of Mahadji Shinde, so were the guns and canons balls for their artillery. Plus they were supplied with uniform dress to wear and tents and other items for camping in the field. Mahadji Shinde's monthly expenditure reached rupees 60 lakhs during the Lalsot Campaign. Also their food supplies were to be centrally arranged, thousand and thousands of bullocks laden with grains were arriving at Shindes camp from Gwalior side during the Lalsot campaign to meet the daily demand.¹ Thus every thing had to be centrally arranged meaning rise in expenditure on regular basis unseen so far, Deccani army had learnt to survive on bare minimum.

Jadunath Sarkar describes the simplicity of a Maratha cavalry man in the preceding period: mounted on a light horse, unencumbered with artillery, baggage (tents etc.), munitions and even food supplies.² Maratha troops only carried the "long spear and short sword against the excellent muskets made for the *campoo* under European supervision".³

Malhar Rao Holkar added an artillery division in did reform his army much earlier in the 1760s after the Battle of Panipat. Malhar engaged his daughter-in-law Ahilyabai and his grandson Malerao Holkar to raise a park of artillery at Gwalior and Sironj to face the challenge from Jat forces then dominating Central India. Especially he prepared to give a fight to the Rana of Gohad.⁴

But Shindes' modernizations of artillery were on a much bigger scale during the 1780s and 1790s. Mahadji ordered more battalions to be raised seeing the crucial role of De Boigne's artillery and infantry at Lalsot in 1787 and then it was followed after every crucial victory i.e., in 1790, after Patan and Merta victories against the Rajputs and then also after victory at Lakheri against Holkar in 1793.

¹ Faqir Khair-ud-din Allahabadi in his *Ibratnamah* quoted in *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, J N Sarkar (trans & ed.), See Appendix, p. 60

² Sarkar, JN, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.102

³ Ibid., p.109

⁴ *Holkarshahica Itihasachi Sadhne*, Vol.1, No.210/31-1-1765; No. 212/31-1-1765; No.216/10-2-1765; No.226 & 227/4-3-1765

Shindes Army commanded by Jiva Dada had 1,00,000 strong cavalry, 50,000 strong infantry consisting of 5 Brigades (each of 10,000 men), Jiva Dada personally commanded 10,000 strong cavalry known as *Khasgi Sanya*, Mahadji personally commanded 15,000 men known as *Khasgi Huzurat*, there were 3,000 men armed contingent for protection of ladies accompanying Mahadji and his sardars. Mahadji to meet the challenge from Jaipur ruler assembled around 50,000 *deccani* horse when Mughal nobles rebelled during the Lalsot campaign 1787.¹ Artillery wing had small & Medium 500 guns as well as 200 big guns, Also the establishment had 400 elephants, 400 bullock carts (*Rath*) driven by oxen, 300 *sadanisawar*, 11,000 Camels, 13,000 oxen to drive the guns.²

Such a huge establishment of Shinde required huge monthly expenditures for payments in the form of salaries and maintaining the supplies of essential items in the camps as Shindes army was always on the move. During the war against the Rajputs Shindes financial crisis reached its limits. Troops spent their own money and ate just one meal a day. Shinde still kept his purse strings loose for De Boignes battalions, providing what ever the French man asked even at the cost of annoying his Deccani generals whose cavalry men were starving and they felt neglected.³ But later his financials problems became too much to handle forcing him to demobilize De Boignes Battalions for some time due to scarcity of funds. "Throughout the year 1789, Mahadji was heavily involved in financial difficulties. He owed 34 months' salary to his Deccani troops. When therefore De Boigne asked for funds to expand his three battalions into Brigade, Mahadji refused and the French general unable to maintain his troops on mere credit gave up Shindes service and retired to Lucknow to indulge in trade along with some other Europeans. Mahadji also faced other problems that year he was ill from March to August and it was followed by his serious differences with Ali Bahadur and Tukoji Holkar." ⁴ By the time he recovered in the early winters a face off with Rajputs

¹ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, p.15

² "Lakh Fauj, Pannas Hazar Paidal va Panchse Topa" yapramane Shindyachi Ranasamagri, from *Holkar Kafi*at.36 quoted in Rajadhyaksha, N V, *op.cit*, p.281,

³ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, pp.31,33,35

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.121

loomed large, Mahadji relented and sent an agent to De Boigne asking him to return on his own terms.¹

During Patan and Merta campaigns Shinde to keep De Boigne's requirements fulfilled even asked bankers to provide all that he needed.² But by this time Mahadji had enough; due to lack of funds for payments first Mughal general Ismail Beg left his side to join hands with Jaipur forces just before the crucial Lalsot campaign leading to his defeat and retreat. Then he had to demobilize De Boignes battalions in 1789 as he couldn't keep up his demands for money to raise more battalions.

Finally in 1790 Shinde assigned territories to his European general to better manage his financial needs after the victory over Rajputs. Probably Mahadji by now realized that the solution to such severe financial crisis that resulted in running away of veteran Mughal general Ismail Beg and demobilization of De Boignes battalions lied in assigning *jagirs* to them.

After De Boigne's military success in Rajputana in 1790 he was asked to raise a second brigade and for their maintenance a territorial grant (*jaiydad*) of the value of rupees 12 lakhs was granted to him by Shinde in the Mughal territory which were under his supervision. Territories assigned to the French general included Bah-Panahat in the Agra district and Jalesar attached to Mathura. But this was only the beginning. Later after his victory over Holkar at Lakheri, De Boigne was commissioned to raise a third Brigade and so in July 1793, he was given a fresh military fief comprising of 52 parganas and worth rupees 30 lakhs a year absorbing his first and smaller fiefs too.³ The annual expense of the two brigades was rupees 18 lakhs. His estate now consisted of two large areas, one in the Central *Doab* with Koel (Aligarh) for its headquarters and another in Mewat (Gurgaon district). Among the *mahals* under De Boignes supervision were Firozabad, Hathras, Khurja and Koel in *Doab* and Palwal, Hodal and Sohna in Gurgaon district.⁴

¹ Ibid.

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, p.35, Mahadji asked for a loan of 20 lakhs from the banker Aba Nayak Seth & others to meet the cash demand

³ Compton, H., *A Particular Account of the European Military Adventurers of Hindustan from 1784 to 1803*, London, 1892, p.48

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4., pp.122-123

De Boigne established his headquarter at Koel which was situated close to Aligarh, the fortification of which were considerably strengthened and beneath its ramparts rose an extensive cantonments capable of holding a large body of troops. Compton says, "Aligarh town itself became an emporium of commerce. It was equidistant from Agra & Delhi and in the centre of De Boigne's districts."¹ L F Smith describes his style of functioning, "I have seen him daily and monthly rise with the Sun, survey his Karkhana, view his troops, enlist recruits, direct the vast movements of three brigades,... regulate the civil and revenue affairs of a *Jaydad* of twenty lakhs of rupees...superintend a private trade of lakhs of rupees."²

Even after De Boigne left India in 1795 these *mahals* in Doab were maintained by Shinde's other European commanders, Perron took over from De Boigne. Perron raised a fourth Brigade at the end of 1801 and a fifth in 1802. His total revenue collection in 1802 reached rupees 80 lakhs a year, the *Doab mahals* alone was yielding rupees 75 lakhs.³

The European commanders of Mahadji developed the economic resources of the *jagirs* assigned to them as De Boigne indulged in private trade worth lakhs of rupees.⁴ De Boigne settled European indigo planters at Khair, Mendu, Koel, Machhua, Maloi, Allahdadpur in Aligarh district, indigo began to be transported to Farrukhabad and from there through Ganges in boats to Calcutta.⁵ In 1792 indigo production further spread to Khurja, Jalesar and some other *mahals*. De Boigne also began to trade in saltpeter from Aligarh to the European markets through Calcutta port.⁶

But on a much larger scale Maratha chiefs' attempt to secure more revenue from the Maratha dominated territories in Hindustan proved counterproductive. Mahadji Shinde constantly changed his *diwan* to collect a higher proportion of his dues from the *ryots* and chieftains. But this policy led to greater desolation of land and squeezing of the peasantry. His actual collection fell to one tenth of the

¹ Compton, H , *op.cit.*, p.63

² Smith, L F, A Sketch of The Rise, Progress and Termination of the Regular Corps Formed and Commanded by Europeans, Calcutta, 1803-04, Typescript, Shri Natnagar Shodh Samsthan, Sitamau, p.75

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.123

⁴ Smith, L F, *op.cit.*, p.75

⁵ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.4, p.115

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.114-115

standard revenue in many places. Historian J N Sarkar comments, “The dishonesty and incapacity of the Maratha civil servants and their masters’ lack of far sight in administration and of statesmanship in policy, destroyed all chances of their repeating the financial successes of De Boigne or Perron.”¹ However, Sarkar’s comment shouldn’t be taken literally as Mahadji Shinde was a military general first and administrator later. He had left Ujjain and Kota, two peacefully administered territories under his subordinates and allies as his priorities were very much to contain the powerful local elites in the North first and establish Maratha supremacy badly damaged after the Battle of Panipat.

¹ Ibid., p.115

CHAPTER 5

MARATHA POWER BEYOND CENTRAL INDIA

Moving out of Central India the Marathas were a dominant force in Rajasthan despite stiff opposition from the local Rajput chiefs, during the period of the Peshwas. Maratha penetration in Rajasthan impacted all the major & minor Rajput States but for the far flung Rathore states of Bikaner & Jaisalmer. Geographical factors too limited Maratha penetration beyond the Aravali Range. Marathas had little to look forward to beyond the Aravali Range dividing Western Rajasthan with sparsely irrigated soil from the Eastern Rajasthan which was rather well irrigated, more fertile and agriculturally prosperous.

Compared to Maratha expansion in Central India (Malwa & Khandesh), Maratha penetration in Rajasthan has a rich historiography.¹ J N Sarkar's coverage of Maratha-Rajput conflict in his *Fall of the Mughal Empire* is highly informative and by far the most comprehensive effort. Later historical writings on Maratha penetration in the region and Rajput-Maratha relations during the 18th century have been largely Rajput & Rajasthan centric approach in the works of most of the local historians.² S C Mishra's study of *Sindhia –Holkar Rivalry in Rajasthan* however is an exception as evident from its title itself.

Except for Jaipur, Maratha relations with the major Rajput States which faced Maratha penetration are documented in the works of G R Parihar (Marwar), K S Gupta (Mewar), R P Shastri (Kota) & M L Sharma (Kota). R K Saxena's much more comprehensive but rich documentation in *Maratha Relations with the Major States of Rajputana* covers the major Rajput states of Jaipur, Marwar, Mewar, Kota and Bundi during the period 1761-1818. Jadunath Sarkar's comprehensive *History of Jaipur* also touches Jaipur-Maratha relations in a much

¹ Tod, James, *Annales and Antiquities of Rajasthan or The Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, 2 Vols, First Published, 1832, Reprint, Delhi, 1971; J N Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 4 volumes, Bombay, 1971; Parihar, G R, *Marwar and The Marathas* (1724-1843), Jodhpur, 1968; Gupta, K. S., *Mewar and the Maratha Relations* (1735-1818 A.D.), Delhi, 1971; Shastri, R P, *Jhala Zalim Singh* (1730-1823), Jaipur, 1971; Saxena, R K, *Maratha Relations with the Major States of Rajputana* (1761-1818), New Delhi, 1973; Gupta, Beni, *Maratha Penetration into Rajasthan through the Mukundara Pass*, Delhi, 1979; Mishra, S. C., *Sindhia- Holkar Rivalry in Rajasthan*, Delhi, 1981

² Besides Col James Tod, in this category are works of K S Gupta, R P Shastri, R K Saxena and G R Parihar.

broader context.¹ Much more detailed work on Jaipur- Maratha relations during Sawai Jai Singh's period is by V S Bhatnagar.² Dilbagh Singh's thesis *Local and Land Revenue Administration of the State of Jaipur(1750-1800)* and later published work *The State, Landlords and Peasants -Rajasthan in the 18th Century* has studied the impact of Maratha presence on the agrarian economy and rural society within the Jaipur territory in particular and Eastern Rajasthan as a greater area of survey.³

The Jaipur State's relations with the Marathas in the second half of the 18th century has been studied in this chapter on the basis of Shinde and Holkar's correspondences with the rulers of Jaipur for the entire period of the second half of the Eighteenth Century, known as *Kharitas*. Correspondences of Peshwa's Maratha *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath based at Jodhpur court during the period 1785-1794 also throws light on Jaipur- Maratha relations. Another untapped sources being used are *Dastur Deekhni* of Jaipur State that have remained untapped so far.⁴

Maratha-Marwar relations in the 1780s and the 1790s too have been focused upon in the light of fresh evidence from the Marathi records, the reports of the Peshwa's Maratha *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath.⁵

Maratha-Rajput relations have to be seen first in the light of the Mughal-Rajput relations in the preceding period of more than 150 years. Satish Chandra's study shows Mughal-Rajput relations to have worked positively and in the greater interest of the Mughal Empire despite several time periods of strained relations with individual Rajput States.⁶ Akbar's relations with Sisodia Rajputs of Mewar

¹ Sarkar, J N, *A History of Jaipur (1503-1938)*, Revised and edited by Raghubir Singh, Delhi, 1984

² Bhatnagar, V. S., *Life and Times of Sawai Jai Singh*, Delhi, 1974

³ Singh, Dilbagh, *Local and Land Revenue Administration of the State of Jaipur(1750-1800)*, Ph.D thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1975; Singh, Dilbagh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants-Rajasthan in the 18th Century*, Delhi, 1990

⁴ *Kharitas* of Gawalior and Indore States preserved in Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner; Peshwa's *Vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath's correspondences with the Poona Court were published in *Itihas Sangraha* Volume of 1914-15 by D B Parasnis. I have used the Hindi translation by D B Chirsagar & Narayan Singh Bhati brought out by Rajasthani Shodh Sansthan, Jodhpur as *Marwar -Maratha Aitihasik Patravali in Parampara*, Vol.93-94, Jodhpur, 1990; Original *Dastur Kaumvar-Dastur Deekhni* papers of Jaipur State for the 18th century period kept at Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner have been referred as well in this chapter while discussing Maratha-Jaipur Relations

⁵ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali, Parampara*, Vol.93-94, Jodhpur, 1990

⁶ Chandra, Satish, *Mughal Religious Policies, The Rajputs and The Deccan*, New Delhi, 1993, pp.72-103

were never cordial but he did manage support from Kachhwahas of Amber and Rathores of Marwar. Jahangir provided a healing touch to the strained relations with the Mewar as he developed cordial ties with successors of Maharana Pratap, Amar Sing(1597-1620) and Karn Singh(1620-1628) and his ties with other Rajput states also improved from those during the days of his father Akbar. Shahjahan's period was not so marked in Mughal –Rajput relations as his energies were focused more on the North-West Frontier. It was Aurangzeb's period that marked a dip in Mughal-Rajput relations as Rathore ruler Jaswant Singh's demise (1678) and problems in revenue realisation forced Aurangzeb to declare Marwar as *Khalisa* territory. Relations with Mewar also touched a low on account of imposition of *jaziya* and reactions from Maharana Raj Singh.¹ But otherwise Rajput chiefs served the Mughal Empire as their military and civil officers in the outlying *subas* and during the campaigns on the Mughal frontiers. "Rajput alliance played an important role in consolidating the empire politically though it didn't broaden its social base."² In Rajasthan region Mughals were paramount powers and didn't annex the territories of the Rajput chiefs. Only exception was Aurangzeb's above mentioned act of invoking *Khalisa* status on Marwar in 1678 as he applied law of escheat to Marwar territory, since Jaswant Singh owed money to the state. Rajput territories in Rajasthan enjoyed internal autonomy as *watan jagirs* of the respective Rajput chiefs while the Mughals acted as paramount ruler with the right to assess & levy taxes.

Maratha-Rajput relations gained momentum in the 1740s after the Marathas conquest of Malwa. Malwa proved an ideal base for launching campaigns in bordering districts of Rajasthan covering areas under Mewar, Kota, Bundi and Jaipur states. The "frontier" for the Marathas began at the edges of Malwa plateau in the 1730s. To the north and west was Rajasthan. Not an entirely unknown territory for the Marathas when they began to seriously campaign in the region in the 1740s.

With regular appointment of Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur as Mughal subadar of Malwa for the periods 1713-1717, 1729-1730 and then again during the period 1732-1737 two regions of Rajasthan and Malwa had come closer. Moreover, local

¹ Gupta, K. S., op.cit., pp.17-18

² Chandra, Satish, op.cit., p.103

Rajput principalities in Malwa were descendants of Rajput chiefs of Rajasthan who had settled down in Malwa during the Mughal period, leading to wider social and cultural contacts and similarity between the two regions at the highest level. Further, during Jai Singh's stay in Malwa as a *subadar*, trade and commerce ties between Ujjain and Jaipur also seem to have made a beginning, as Jai Singh seem to have invited traders and merchants to settle down in the city of Jaipur that he built in his lifetime. After all he was holding the post of Mughal *subadar* of Malwa almost 10 years between 1713 and 1737 and had also been striving to expand Jaipur state boundaries by getting *ijara* rights over Mughal *parganas* lying on his state boundaries in the east. Also in 1728 he had laid the foundations for his new capital city of Jaipur (Jainagar). Belongings of many trading families from Ujjain are referred in the later *Kharita* records of Shinde and Holkar. Malhar Rao Holkar in 1764 wrote to Madho Singh to provide protection to Seth Kewalram. Sawai Jai Singh (*Bade Maharaj*) had brought his father from Ujjain.¹ In fact relation seem to have been much wider as in other letter Malhar Rao says, "Pandit Harbajikrishna Brahman, is there in Jaipur court (as vyasacharya) since the time of Bade Maharaj along with many other Brahmans and are facing trouble, the state should do justice so that Brahmans there are not in any difficulty."² Even in Ujjain Jai Singh built an observatory similar to one in Jaipur and Delhi and also settled a locality on his name called Jaisinghpura in a suburb of Ujjain called Baranpur.³ Jai Singh's period as Malwa's subadar seem to have led to greater proximity between the two regions of Rajasthan and Malwa, after all the Rajput ruler had his own designs on Malwa, to make it a part of his own territory once the Marathas had unsettled the Mughal power in the suba.

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.85, Posh Badi 10, 1821/1764

...सेट केवलराम उठे रहेछे सो राज गौर प्रदाखत तो ठेठ सुं करते ही छो... दोनु त्रफका सुभर्चीतकछे सो हरभांत गौर प्रदाखत रखोगे बड़े महाराज यांके बापकुं उजेन से लाये थे सो बहौत अच्छी प्रितपाल करी अब उंहीभांतराज नीभावोगे...

² *Indore Kharita* No.21, Bhadon Sudi 1, 1808/1751

...पंडत हरबाजीकृष्ण ब्राम्हण सरकार को चाकर सवाई जैपुर में व्यासाचार्य बहौत बर्सा सुं बड़े माहाराजजीके आश्रितछे... पंडत मजकुर जंजाल में पडयोछे... पंडत मजकुरसुं खेचल न होय सो करोला...

³ *Selection from Satara Raja and the Peshwa's Diaries (SSRPD)*, Vad, R B G C & Parasnis, D.B.(compiled & ed.) Peshwa Madhavrao I/Vol.I, Poona-Bombay, 1905-1911, No. 305/ 1769-70, One suburb of Baranpur called Jaysinghpura belonged to the Raja of Jaynagar (Jaipur). Madhavrao ordered it to be continued to him through an order issued in 1769-70.

Naturally, Marathas as a rival to the existing Mughal power had gained vital support from Jai Singh during their campaigns in Malwa, “Jai Singh represented pro-Maratha camp in the Mughal Court”.¹ But once Malwa came under Maratha domination, Jai Singh failed to control Peshwa’s territorial ambitions further North. Marathas campaign in Rajasthan was spearheaded by Peshwa’s sardars Shinde and Holkar from the very beginning.² Maratha challenge to Mughal power represented by Sawai Jai Singh in 1732-33 reached very close to the Rajasthan borders as they first approached Dungarpur and Banswada by the end of 1732.³ At the beginning of 1733, Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Shinde reached quite close to Rajasthan borders as they managed to encircle Jai Singh at Mandsor in Malwa. Maratha forces reached right up to the borders of Rajasthan as Shinde and Holkar’s forces cut off ‘grain and water supply’ to Jai Singh’s camp forcing him to negotiate peace and agree to Maratha demands.⁴

In 1734 for the first time they entered Rajasthan on invitation from Bundi chief Pratap Singh Hada and attacked Bundi capturing the fort.⁵ But their biggest success came when they confronted the combined Rajput & Mughal forces led by Sawai Jai Singh & Mughal noble Khan Dauran in 1735 on Malwa - Rajasthan borders and defeated them by cutting off their provisions and outplayed the heavy and unwieldy Mughal forces by guerilla tactics of lightning raid. Jai Singh had to rush back to Jaipur as Ranoji and Malhar approached very close, merely 20 miles from Jaipur. For the first time Maratha forces invested areas far deeper within Jaipur territory than any previous Maratha raid had made it in the past. This happened only a year after the Hurda conference (1734) called to form a combined front of major Rajput states against the Marathas.

Rajputs growing concern of Maratha presence on Rajasthan borders was a fact. However, Peshwa’s relations with Rajputs of Rajasthan hadn’t hit a low during the 1730s. Bajirao’s mother Radha Bai passed through Mewar and Jaipur

¹ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition or A Century of Anarchy, The First Phase, 1698-1765*, Bombay, 1936, pp.208-209

² *Selection from the Peshwa Daftar(henceforth SPD)*, G S Sardesai(ed.), Vol.14, Bombay 1931, No.2/16-3-1732

³ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.223

⁴ *SPD*, Vol.14, No.24/12-4-1735; Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, Bombay, 1971, pp.157-158

⁵ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, p.156

visiting the holy places in Rajputana in 1734-35. Peshwa himself showed high regards for the Maharana of Mewar during his visit of 1736. Bajirao met Maharana Jagat Singh near Udaipur and signed a treaty for an annual tribute of rupees 1, 60, 000.¹

But immediately after the conquest of Malwa in 1738, Marathas led by Shinde and Holkar were in Kota in Feb.-Mar. 1738 to settle issue with Durjansal Hada who had dared to help Nizam by marching towards Bhopal. Jai Singh who was managing the affairs of Rampura on Malwa –Rajasthan borders on behalf of his son Madho Singh also agreed to pay the tribute for Rampura to the Marathas.

Conquest of Malwa further fuelled Bajirao's territorial ambitions though he didn't live long, breathing his last in 1740. Maratha entry in Rajput territory in a big way started during his son Peshwa Balaji Bajirao regime. Since Hurda conference of 1734 Marathas were being perceived as a threat on the borders of Rajasthan but succession dispute and internal disunity forced the major Rajput states to ally with Maratha sardars. Peshwas sardars Shinde and Holkar were invited and made party to the succession disputes for Jaipur throne by Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh after the death of Sawai Jai Singh in 1743. Shinde and Holkar exploited this opportunity of making a stronger presence into Rajasthan territory during the period 1746-1751. Shinde and Holkar's role in the succession dispute of Jaipur that saw Madho Singh take over Ishwari Singh after latter's suicide and Marathas exorbitant demands from Madho Singh was a turning point in Maratha-Rajput relations. By mid 1740s Marathas had already set up their base at Kota and were dominant in Kota-Bundi territory, they were trying to regularize revenue collection in the bordering districts of Kota and Bundi.² From the very beginning of the 1750s Maratha sardars started putting pressure on Madho Singh for tribute and territorial gains promised in the course of the succession process. Local Rajput zamindars were the target of Maratha armed contingents for tribute payment till the end of the Eighteenth Century.

Marathas involvement in Jodhpur started on a similar note after the death of Abhay Singh in 1749 as his son Ram Singh and Brother Bakht Singh had a

¹ Sinh, Raghubir, *Malwa in Transition*, p.285; Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, p.163, For the collection of the above amount Marathas were assigned Banhada pargana.

² *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, A B Phalke (compiled & ed.) Vol.1, Gawalior, 1929, No.17,18,24,26,29,30,32

dispute over succession to Jodhpur throne and Malhar Rao Holkar was invited by Ram Singh. However, Jayappa Shinde was deputed to support the cause of Ram Singh. Like Jaipur, in Jodhpur too Shinde's participation in the succession dispute in 1752-54 was beginning of long term domination of the Marathas over the Jodhpur state through demands for tribute and territorial acquisitions which contested by both sides. First we take up Maratha- Jaipur relations during the period 1750-1800.

SHINDE AND HOLKAR RELATIONS WITH JAIPUR STATE

With bordering Malwa region under Maratha control already, it was areas around Kota and Bundi on the border of Rajasthan and edges of Malwa Plateau which served as base for military operations for the Marathas inside Rajasthan in the 1740s and 1750s. Jaipur territory lay next to Kota and Bundi in the west. Also, since most of agriculturally rich pockets in Rajasthan were concentrated in its south-eastern part, Marathas activities were also largely confined to this region in the next fifty years as they coveted fertile portions of land with good revenue potential. Ajmer, Kishangarh, Shahpura, Malpura, Rampura, Tonk, Toda, Sambhar, Kota and Bundi happened to be major areas of Maratha interest till the end of the 18th century; all these areas were also located where frontiers of the three major Rajput states of Mewar, Marwar and Jaipur converged. Most of the areas besides these falling in Mewar, Marwar and Jaipur were not so attractive to the Marathas in terms of revenue earnings as this particular concentration of land. Probably that is how one can explain Marathas long term involvement in Rajasthan despite stiff resistance all around. Unlike Central India Marathas revenue arrangements in Rajasthan's Jaipur, Marwar and Mewar states were merely to gather tribute rather than extensive revenue administration machinery. Otherwise they were interested in occupying and controlling just fertile territories like Kota or areas having great trade and commerce potential like Sambhar.

However, unlike Central India, Marathas met strong opposition to their presence and movements inside the Rajput territory which is being examined here in the light of fresh evidence. For the Marathas much bigger and strong Rajput states were not easy to control and settle for administration the way it had happened for them in most parts of Central India during the later half of the 18th Century. Compared to smaller Rajput principalities of Malwa and Bundelkhand

Rajput states of Rajasthan were much more complex, developed, equipped and strategically positioned to face the Marathas. We have already seen how Mughals had provided internal autonomy to Rajput chiefs as paramount powers in the region. During Sawai Jai Singh's period Jaipur state had become very powerful and the richest in Rajasthan.¹

Marathas campaigns in Rajasthan and the neighbouring Jat territory during the 1750s often turned bloody and many of their front rank sardars and family members lost their lives in the fight with Rajput & Jat rulers. Probably this strengthened their resolve to dominate the region even after the battle of Panipat.

Many facets of Maratha-Rajput relations emerge through the study of Shinde and Holkar's presence in Jaipur territory from the correspondences of their family members with Jaipur ruler during the period 1749-50 to 1790. Since Balaji Bajirao period Peshwa's indulgence in North India affairs was largely through his sardars Shinde and Holkar. Around 500 *Kharita* documents in Rajasthani that are being referred from the Rajasthan State Archive Bikaner are filed separately as Indore-Jaipur and Gwalior-Jaipur Records belonging to the respective families of Holkar and Shinde. However, during the early period that is 1750s and 1760s there are substantial correspondences emanating from the Peshwa's court too that are found in these two collections. Fewer *kharitas* received from the Peshwa's court indicate lesser indulgence of Peshwa in the affairs of Jaipur state and growing importance of Shinde and Holkar in the Jaipur state from the 1750s onwards.

Indore - Jaipur *kharita* Collection provides an account of how Holkars were trying to consolidate their position in the areas promised to them by Jaipur ruler Madho Singh. Earliest document of this kind preserved in the Indore -Jaipur *kharita* collection at the Rajasthan State Archive Bikaner dates back to 1749, which shows Holkar demanding payment and control over pargana Tonk from Jaipur ruler Madho Singh.² Here After these correspondences are regular for the whole of the 18th century. With the details available in these records it is possible to reconstruct Holkars position in Jaipur state in terms of extent of their control

¹ Sarkar, J N, A *History of Jaipur*, Revised & edited. by Raghubir Singh, New Delhi, 1984, p.218

² *Indore Kharita* No.1, Kartik Sudi 13, 1806/1749

...सिध श्री सर्वउपमा लायक माहाराजा श्री माधोसिंह जी जोग्य श्री मलारराव होलकर केन श्री बंचा आपरंच परगणो टोंक के वसुल वास्ते वा... के आमल वास्ते पंडत राधो गोविंद... भेजाछे... मीती कातीक शुदी त्रयोदशी संवत् 1806

over the areas that they claimed and how Jaipur ruler and the local Rajputs were reacting to their presence in the region.

HOLKAR'S PRESENCE IN JAIPUR STATE

Marathas made a formal entry into Rajasthan during the period of the succession dispute between Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh after the death of Sawai Jai Singh in 1743. This was also an opportunity for the Marathas to expand their influence in the region as Rajput states were badly divided as Sarkar aptly describes the scene when he says, "Rajputana became again a mere 'geographical expression' a bundle of warring atoms, less than ten years after Jai Singh's death."¹ Marathas were already active in the Kota region by this time. Here was an opportunity to gain more than just tribute for the two Maratha sardars. In such times of domestic feud among the Rajput chiefs Marathas were gaining some legitimacy for their presence in the region from at least a particular section of the local elite who invited their support.

Sarkar and later historians have dealt in depth how both Shinde and Holkar were heavily bribed by Rajput princes to favour their cause.² Later Peshwa asked Maratha *vakil* to press for the promised amount which Ishwari Singh couldn't manage. Shinde and Holkar were sent to collect the promised amount from Ishwari Singh who committed suicide on Dec 14, 1750, finding it difficult to cope with the Maratha demands. Now it was left to Madho Singh to fulfill the Maratha demands as he took over as the ruler of Jaipur state in early 1751. Jayappa Shinde's demand of one third or at least one fourth of the territory of Jaipur to be made over to the Marathas didn't go well with the new ruler and the Rajputs nobles.³ Madho Singh and the Maratha troops engaged in a bloody battle within the Jaipur city walls in which thousands of Maratha soldiers were killed.⁴ Sensing their weakened position at that moment Shinde and Holkar went for negotiations with Madho Singh adding to their previous demands payment of compensation for loss of horses and property.⁵

¹ Sarkar, J N, *A History of Jaipur*, p.201

² Sarkar, J. N., *Fall of The Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, pp.174-189

³ Ibid., p.188

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of The Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, p.189; Sardesai, G. S., *New History of the Marathas(henceforth NHM)*, Vol.2, Bombay, 1958, p.251

⁵ Sarkar, *Fall of The Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, p.191

In the end the whole episode lasting 6 years ended badly damaging the good old tie that Marathas and Jaipur state had built in the period of Sawai Jai Singh.¹ Issue of tribute payment and transfer of areas as per the demands of Peshwa as well as his sardars Jayappa Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar were not conclusive, even after the matters were sorted out by both sides following the bloodbath in the Jaipur city, leaving lot of scope for the later Shinde and Holkar sardars to put pressure on Madho Singh and his successors. This became the pretext for continued intervention in the affairs of Jaipur State, evident from the correspondences of Shinde and Holkar with the Jaipur ruler in the period that follows.

When the succession dispute was over, the Jaipur state and Maratha sardars Shinde and Holkar opened a regular channel for communication on matters of mutual interest as both sardars tried to strengthen their presence in the region. The onset of regular contacts is evident in brisk exchange of *Kharitas*, appointment of officials into each others courts, exchange of gifts, asking for escorts when their men travelled into others territory. Maratha visitors arriving at Jaipur court is also recorded in local records maintained by Jaipur court known as *Dastur Kaumvar-Dastur Deekhni*.²

There was a perceptible change in Maratha relations with the Rajputs after Madho Singh took over as Jaipur ruler. As Marathas moved closer to Rajasthan borders with firm control over Malwa and a base at Kota their territorial ambitions made them look further up in the North. Earlier during the 1730s and even in the 1740s when on campaigns Maratha bands only demanded money and didn't stay back after collecting the tribute. But now since Madho Singh's rise to power with the help of Maratha support, Shinde and Holkar were encouraged to make most of this new situation. Now Shinde and Holkar began asking for tribute on a regular basis to fuel their military campaigns in the North. Even they sought military support from Rajput chieftains for their campaigns against their rivals in other

¹ Sardesai, G. S., *NHM*, Vol.2, p.251

² *Dastur Kaumvar-Dastur Deekhni* records in Rajasthani are preserved in Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner. These are records of persons visiting the Jaipur court from a particular region maintained by the Jaipur State. These records were maintained region wise like *Dastur Deekhni* was record of Marathas visiting the Jaipur court. Further *Dastur Deekhni* recorded the name of the individual along with his association with Peshwa, Shinde and Holkar and the year and date of his arrival at the Jaipur court. It also mentioned the ceremonial welcome, gifts and presents bestowed on the Maratha visitor by the Jaipur court.

regions. All this was certainly enhancing the proximity between the two sides as never before. Madho Singh was reminded of his father Sawai Jai Singh's friendly gestures by the Marathas. Correspondences of Peshwa, both sardars Shinde and Holkar many a times described the past relations in order to gain their goodwill in future.¹ Rajputs chiefs' disunity and rivalry encouraged limited Maratha presence so long it didn't threaten their sovereignty in the region. But Maratha designs in Rajasthan were much different from the goodwill gestures shown in their correspondences.

The succession to Jaipur throne for Madho Singh had come at a price. As per the terms of negotiations with the Marathas Holkar family were to get control over Tonk, Toda, Malpura (including Fagi) and Barwada in Newai. Madho Singh also agreed to pay a *nazar* of 10 lakhs of rupees to the Maratha King. Malhar Rao gave Poona court a written undertaking to pay it in four installments during 1749-50. Malhar Rao was allowed to occupy *parganas* in Jaipur territory till the payment was completed.²

Soon after Madho Singh took over the administration of Jaipur and negotiations with Marathas were completed Holkar began to stake claim over the *parganas* that were earlier promised. A letter of Oct-November 1749 shows Holkar demanding payment and control over Pargana Tonk from Jaipur ruler Madho Singh for the support he provided against Ishwari Singh in the battle of Bagru in 1748.³ Holkar also began demanding the payment of the promised money which became due now. Earlier Madho Singh had given Holkars control over Rampura

¹ *Gwalior Kharita*, No. 195, Posh Sudi 2, 1825/1768;

Peshwa Madhav Rao to Rawat Jaswant Singh, ...बड़ा महाराज सो तीन पीढ़ी का इकलास आगा सु चाल्या आया उसकी वृद्धी करना...

Indore Kharita No.69, Mah Sudi 11, 1813/1756;

...जीं दीनासुं राज सवाई जैपुर दाखल हुवा सो ही दीन आज ताई येक ही कर बतायास चोती मामलत में तथा हेत बेवार में ज्युं रीत बड़ा राजा की रीतछे ज्युं ही जजनायो इमे राज उपर कोई दुस णछे

Gwalior Kharita No.199, Posh Sudi 2, 1825/1768

...तीन पीढ़ी को स्नेह चलता आया तीस की... वृद्धि करना पघडि वदल होना अइसाहेत आपके दील में है सो हि हमारो दिल में है अब हम आपके ताई वडे माहाराज की जगा जानत हैसोहेत उनका चित में था सो आप उसकु सेवट निभावोगै...

² Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, pp.182-183

³ *Indore Kharita* No.1, Kartik Sudi 13, 1806/1749

too an area which was a part of Mewar and given to Madho Singh by Maharana of Udaipur.

During the period following the crowning of Madho Singh a lot of correspondence flowed from Holkars court to the Jaipur ruler right upto the time Marathas march to the North just before the Battle of Panipat. Both Malhar Rao Holkar and his son Khanderao Holkar addressed Madho Singh so as to assert their dominance over the latter.¹ In the recent past only Jaipur ruler had agreed to the demands of the Marathas to compensate for the damages suffered during the attack made on them in the Jaipur city in 1751.²

Kharitas provide an account of how Holkars were making arrangements to cover up the areas claimed by them from Jaipur ruler Madho Singh. With the details available in these records it is possible to reconstruct Holkars position in Jaipur state in terms of extent of their control over the areas that they claimed and how Jaipur ruler and the local Rajputs were reacting to their presence in the region.

In the beginning of 1750s Malhar Rao Holkar and his son Khanderao Holkar were trying to settle the areas claimed by them within Jaipur territory soon after Madho Singh took over as Jaipur ruler. As a first step they made few appointments of their own men in the Jaipur court to have proper communication channel and diplomatic tie. Bhaiya Tulsi Ram was appointed as Holkar's representative at Jaipur court.³ This was followed by two more Maratha officials Pandit Shankraji and Pandit Ganeshji being appointed and sent to the Jaipur court to look after the work of tribute collection.⁴ Kanhiram from Jaipur side was appointed as their representative in Holkar's court.⁵

Another official Mishr Sitaram was appointed to handle all official work for Holkar.⁶ Anupam Ramji was another official who was also working for Jaipur ruler in Holkar's court.

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.3 to No.78

² Sarkar, J N, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.1, p.190

³ *Indore Kharita*, No.5, Phalgun Badi 6, 1807/1750

⁴ The *kharita* date shows that it was drafted just three days after the one which showed the appointment of Bhaiya Tulsi Ram; *Indore Kharita* No.9, Phalgun Badi 10, 1807/1750; *Indore Kharita* No.38, Kartik Sudi 1, 1809/1752

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.35, Bhadon Sudi 10, 1809/1752

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No.40, Ashadh Badi 3, 1810/1753

Holkars by this time also appointed officials to man their outposts(*thanas*) in the *parganas* which they claimed and probably set up thanas there, Malhar asked in a letter to Madho Singh to handover pargana Rampura and Hinglajgarh to Pandit Govind, sent there as Holkar's representative. The letter also asked Madho Singh to inform his men in the area -local *qiladar* and *talukdar*, about it in order to avoid any problem in settling the said pargana.¹ It appears that Jaipur was not willing to part with above areas but for the pressure being applied on them from Holkar side.

Also there were areas where claims were disputed where they shared common boundaries, Holkars tried to assert their claim over such areas. Khanderao Holkar wrote to Madho Singh in 1752 that a portion of the *mamlat* in the name of Hargovind was also falling in his territory and thus asked for payment of tribute (*mamliat*) of the said area to his officials.² The massacre in the month of January 1751 of Marathas in Jaipur city seems to have triggered uprising in other parts of the Jaipur region too. Nainwa and Bundi where Holkar had their outposts (*thanas*), some local chiefs encroached on Holkar's possessions during this period. Malhar Rao Holkar asked Madho Singh to control local Rajput chief Kishan Singh Hada. Holkar also warned Madho Singh of serious consequences if the disturbance of the Rajawat Kachhawas continued.³ Going by the text of the message the local people were to be warned of severe consequences in case they repeated their earlier acts of resistance to the Maratha presence in their territory.

Holkars were by this time staking claims over some other territories too. Malhar Rao Holkar wrote to Madho Singh against sending forces in Serpur Talhati, Aalanpur and Panchmahal area under Maratha possessions, his *kamavisdars* Pandit

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.8, Phalgun Badi 9, 1807/1750

...परगणा रामपुरा व हींगलाजगढ़ पंडित गोवींद कृष्ण के हवाले किया छे तो राज उठां का तालुकदार वा कीलादार ने लीखा भेजोला जो दरोबस्त रामपुरा पा परगणा व हींगलाज गढ़ पंडित मशारनीले के हवाले की जो कोई बात की खेंचल न करेलो...

² *Indore Kharita* No.31, Ashar Sudi 4, 1809/1752

...श्री हरगोवींदजी के मारफत से हमारी मामलीयत थोड़ी सी आपके सरकार में छे सो कनीराम ने कबूल कर राज के तरफ आयाछे वा हमारे तरफ से श्री सीताराम जी मीश्र आपके पास भेजाछे सो आप... मामलीयत चुकाय देना...

³ *Indore Kharita* No.14, Jeth Sudi 13, 1808/1751

...अठे सुनबा में आयोछे जो राजावता वगैरे नैनवा-बुंदी की तरफ कजीया किया चाहेछी राज इ बात कु नीकां जाणोछो ही ये जायगा म्हा की छे कोई ईवात के चाले पडेलो तो जीं की फलभुगते लीजीं सुं उठां का लोकाने ताकीद की जो जो बेअदबी न करे...

Balaji Samraj and Pandit Sadashiv Gopal were posted in Serpur Talhati and Bundi areas.¹ While the two sides were apprehensive of each others territorial designs the relations on paper appeared cordial as language used was very polite and diplomatic, Khanderao Holkar addressed Madho Singh as brother (*Bhaiji*) in his letters.²

In pargana Malpura Pandit Balaji Gopal was appointed *kamavisdar* in place of Pandit Balaji Samraj in the year 1752. In fact some work of assessment of revenue had also been carried out by the outgoing Maratha official as the document says that Pandit Balaji Samraj had submitted income details of the mamlat that he was asked to hand over to his successor Pandit Balaji Gopal.³

But it seems the disturbances were not stopping against the Marathas. In the year 1752 both Malhar Rao Holkar and Jayaji Shinde in a joint *kharita* appealed to Madho Singh against sending forces to disturb Maratha *thanas* and for disturbing the settlement process in Serpur and Aalanpur areas.⁴

Holkars were getting opposed all around by local Rajputs in their new possessions within Jaipur region and on its borders. Malhar Rao asked Madho Singh to hand over pargana Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Chhota Rampur and Serpur to Balaji Shamraj and stop all acts of disturbances at Maratha *thanas* or face the consequences.⁵ Madho Singh was informed about misbehaving of a local chieftain Lachiram Natani in 1752.¹

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.27, Jeth Budi 7, 1809/1752.

...पंडत बालाजी सामराज व पंडत सादासिव गोपाल कामावीसदार सेरपुर तलहटी व बुंदी वगैरे को लीखो आयो जो राज ने फौज अपनी सेरपुर तलहटी व अलणापुर व पंचमाहाल में वगैरे भेजी या माहाल को अमल म्हा के तरफ छे उठें फौज भेजनो का ईसलाल आब वाने सीताबीसु बुलाय लेवोला जो मुलक से खेंचली न करे

² *Indore Kharita* Holkar Kharita, No.19, Sawan Sudi 12, 1808/1751; also see *Indore Kharita* No.48, Kuonwar (Ashwin) Sudi 14, 1810/1753

...सीध श्री महाराजाधिराज राज राजेन्द्र श्री भाइजी श्री सवाई माधोसींघजी जोग्य ली. श्री खंडेराव होलकर... also, स्वस्ती श्री महाराजाधीराज राज राजेन्द्र श्री भाई जी श्री सवाई माधोसींघ जी जोग्य ली. श्री खंडेराव होलकर केन श्री...

³ *Indore Kharita* No.24, Chaitra Badi 7, 1809/1752

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.26, Jeth Badi 7, 1809/1752

...सेरपुर वा आलणपुर वागैरे सरकार को आमलछे सो आपको मालुमछे उधरी आप तरफसों फौज रवाना करोछे सो जाहर हुवा तो सरकार के ठाने बैठाछे आमलमो। खीचल करना ये बात आप लायेक नहीं छे... प्रांत मजकुर मों कजीयो न करें सो बात करना फेर नालस न आवे सोही करोला...

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.36, Asoj (Ashwin) Badi 12, 1809/1752

Madho Singh had his own ways of countering Maratha presence. In pargana Toda where Holkars had control, the existing *Chaudhuri* and *Kanungo* were replaced by a *parwana* issued in the name of another person named Bakhtam on payment of 15,000 rupees by Jaipur ruler. This order of Madho Singh was protested by Holkar who asked for revoking of the order by issuing a *talab parwana*.²

Malhar it seems was informed about helplessness of the Jaipur state to make payment. Jaipur's *diwan* Hargovind Natani seems to have told Malhar the ground reality as he mentioned to Holkar that *amaldar* (*amil*) of pargana Malpura was not paying the full amount of money to Holkar's *kamavisdars*, Holkar now wanted Madho Singh to stop that particular *amaldar* from interfering in the payment of money.³ Later Khanderao himself toured Jaipur areas under Holkar's domination to settle the *mamlats*.⁴

Besides problems in the areas assigned to Holkar tribute payment as per agreement was also not happening for the Holkars. In fact Khanderao Holkar wrote to Madho Singh for payment of the tribute that was promised in mid (June–July) 1752 and as it was long since it became due.⁵ Later his father Malhar also made it known to Madho Singh that his men Ganesh Pandit and Shankaraji Pandit had reported about non collection of already due money. He wrote that Peshwa was in need of money and so it should be arranged and sent fast.⁶ Next year pressure for payment of tribute was much greater as *kharitas* were despatched in *Baisakh*,

...परगणो टोंक, टोडा, मालपुर, छोटा रामपुर व सेरपुर वगैरे को तालुका पंडित बालाजी शामराज फुरमाइछे तो राज उठा का आमल में कोई खतरो करेलो जाने ताकीद करोला ये बात न माने लो ज्याने सजा होयेली...

¹ Indore Kharita No.36, Asoj (Ashwin) Badi 12, 1809/1752

...लछीराम नाटाणी बेअदबी की राह करेछे वुं की गई गुजर न होयेली...

² Indore Kharita No.25, Baisakh Badi 12, 1809/1752

³ Indore Kharita No.44, Sawan Sudi 1, 1810/1753

⁴ Indore Kharita No.46, Bhadon Badi 14, 1810/1753

⁵ Indore Kharita, No.32, Ashad Sudi 10, 1809/1752

...दीवाण कनीरामजी अठे आयासो अठा का रूपया वास्ते... अठे करार कर गया जोमहाराज हजुर जाय रूपया की नीशा कर भेजांला वांने गया घणा दीन हुवाछे तो आप ताकीद कर करार माफक भेजोला

⁶ Indore Kharita, No.38, Kartik Sudi 1, 1809/1752

Sawan and *Posh* months reminding Jaipur ruler about the pending dues.¹ Moreover, the language used was no more polite. Malhar Rao Holkar reminded Madho Singh about non payment of tribute and expressing his displeasure wrote that it was not expected of him.²

Jaipur ruler also adopted methods to evade payments of tribute to Holkar. Amount promised for payment did not materialize due to one or the other reason, against full amount only a part was paid. In such a case of payment by Jaipur *diwan* Hargovind rupees 10,000 out of 50,000 rupees was still due, about which Khanderao reminded his counterpart in 1753.³

Often the *hundis* sent to be exchanged with cash at other places were not honoured. In one such case in the year 1753 a *hundi* of 39,000 rupees to be exchanged at Aurangabad was not honoured by the local banker (*Sahukar*), even *hundi* dispatched for Peshwa was not exchanged; Khanderao Holkar wrote back to Jaipur *diwan* Hargovind asking him to issue only valid *hundi* document in future.⁴ Another case of Jaipur's *hundi* worth 3 lakhs rupees in the name of a Aurangabad based banker not being honoured was also reported by Holkars in the year 1753.⁵

Maratha pressure for payment of tribute grew every year, in 1754 Malhar wrote for dues to be paid to Khanderao which had not been paid by Jaipur officials so far. The language used in Malhar's letter expressed his disgust over the matter

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.38, Baishakh Sudi 2, 1810/1753; *Indore Kharita* No.43, Sawan Badi 12, 1810/1753; *Indore Kharita* No.49, Posh Badi 5 1810/1753

² *Indore Kharita* No.43, Sawan Badi 12, 1810/1753

...रूपया का करार मदार पहीले दीवान कनीराम राज के सलाह माफक ढैराय गया तीण में येक बात करार माफक अमल में न आई या बात राज ने जोग न छे जी बात में सलुख रहे और आगे केताक काम काज राज के सलाह से होवे सोही करोला

³ *Indore Kharita* No.47, Bhadon Badi 14, 1810/1753

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.48, Kuonwar Sudi 14, 1810/1753

...राज ने शहर औरंगाबाद की उनचालीस हजार की हुंडी भेजी वा सरकार के पैसों की हुंडी भेजी थी तेकीपेठ हुंडी की दीकत हुयी पैसे पलो में पडे नहीं वा बाकी के पैसों की.. सबब अब खत लीखयोछे सो आपके दील में पैसे देणो होय तो औरंगाबाद की हुंडी की पेंठ वा बाकी पैसों की तजवीज कर भेज दीजो

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.46, Bhadon Badi 14, 1810/1753

...हुंडी रूपया तीन लाख की भेजी सो भी सावकारा ने उठें रूपया न पोंहच्या जीसु अढे ओरंगाबादमों हुंडी का रूपया दीया नहीं ये बात क्यु... नहीं तो साफ जवाब लीख भेजो ती माफक करणा होय सो करांगा...

as he felt it was not justified to make repeated requests - asking them to send the money.¹

Malhar was also was trying to extract payments from Sambhar area falling under Jaipur ruler. In 1754 Holkar wrote about it to Madho Singh as the contract to pay 1000 rupees as *Tankha* (salary) had not been fulfilled in the last two years to local Maratha collector of revenue Timaya Gosaviji, even though *diwan* of Jaipur Hargovind had directed the local officials to pay the amount. This showed that local officials of Jaipur ruler in Sambhar were opposed to Maratha presence.²

Rajputs bought time by making negotiations longer, paying only in parts the full sum promised to the Marathas as Peshwa's agent commented in September 1765, "This court moves very slowly and protracts business" when Madho Singh had agreed to pay arrears of tribute to seek Maratha support against the Jats.³ The delay tactics must have eased off the financial burden on Rajputs for some time. This study has also considered the fact that Rajputs were quite a developed state in terms of their vast experience in diplomacy and negotiations as an ally of the Mughals in the past compared to the relatively immature Maratha sardars who unlike the Peshwa acted in haste while dealing with foreign powers, only later during the period of Mahadji Shinde Maratha diplomacy took centre stage while dealing with other powers. In the early stages of Maratha expansion in Rajasthan Rajput rulers probably exploited this situation.

In 1754 Holkars were engaged with the Jats⁴ also and Malhar Rao lost his son Khanderao in the battle fought near Kumbher. The very next year he marched to his homeland in the Deccan. But Holkar kept Jaipur bothering for payments. Asking for money in quite a dominating manner from the Jaipur ruler - Malhar wrote in 1755, "...I am going to my own country (*Desh*) and *Diwan* Kanhiramji will inform about the location of our army camp and there send all remaining dues."⁵

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.53, Jeth Badi 11, 1811/1754

...खंडेराव का रूपया राज का मुतसद्या उपरे आवेछै सो वसुल में आवे नहीं जी सुराज मुतसद्या ने ताकीद कराय करार माफक दीलावोला इ बात वास्ते फेर लीखबो मुनासब न छे लीखे बीना पोंहचाव बो जोग छे

² *Indore Kharita* No.60, Kartik Badi 9, 1811/1754

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.366

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.313

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.62, Jeth Badi 13, 1812/1755

While dealing with Jaipur state, Marathas seem to have ignored the fact that they were dealing with an established power which had dealt with the Mughal Empire for more than 150 years before their arrival in the region. Delays, non-payment of tribute and defiance of Maratha authorities in territories dominated by the Holkars continued even in the following years. In the years 1756 & 1757 matters didn't improve, Holkars' pressure tactics continued with not much of reciprocity from the Jaipur ruler's side. But now was the time when serious warning and threats began to be issued to Madho Singh from all three Maratha sardars Holkar, Shinde and Peshwa's representative Raghunath Rao. In 1756 Jaipur ruler was told by one of the representative of Shinde that his rule over Jaipur had to be in alliance with *Subedarji* (Malhar Rao Holkar) and *Patel Saheb* (Mahadji Shinde). Further the message to Jaipur ruler read, "... this is not fair from your side as you have delayed in payment and not informed or told us clearly, please keep our suggestions in mind."¹ Even Holkar's agent Satwaji Rajola visited Rampura and Bhanpura on borders of Jaipur territory to confirm payments and asked Madho Singh to stop disturbances in Holkar's *thanas* in the Rampura area.²

Shri Raghunath Baji Rao wrote to Madho Singh in 1757 from Shahjehanabad (Delhi) about Jaipur's failure to pay instalment (*kistbandi*) of money of *Kartik* month so far as per the contract (*karar*). Message from him read "...send money quickly that will be better for you."³

...अबार म्हा को देस की तरफ जाबो होसी चार महीना बाद छावणी का डेरा दीवान कन्हिराम जी ने भेजोला उठे सारो हीसाब देख दुरस्ताई कर दीजेलो...

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.66, Kartik Sudi 13, 1813/1756

...सो या बात माहाराज कु जोग्य नहीं जो पैसा देण्णा में सुस्ति करे और आप ताकिद दीलवावो नहीं यासु साफ नहीं कहो तो आदमि बीदा कर जे जीस दीन माहाराज के मरजी में देना आवेगा तद पावेगे हम भि आजमेर की तरफ आवते हे हमारि गौर राखणी जोग्य है

² *Indore Kharita* No.67, Posh Sudi 10, 1813/1756

...श्री सुबादारजी के हुकम माफक रामपुरा भानपुरा अमल कर लीयो रूपयां की पकी नीसां लेबा वास्ते म्हे इठे आया सो दीवान कनीरामजी आल मील्य़ा जवाब सवाल हुवा पाछें दीवाण जी ने ठहराया जो पाछला बाकी रूपया लेर श्री सुबादार जी के हजुर जावांछा उठे गया पाछें रामपुरा बाबत अरज करां लाखो... उसी तो थाने परवाना मोकलाला तबताई मुलुक को उजाड बीगाड करो मती...

³ *Indore Kharita* No.72, Kartik Sudi 10, 1814/1757

...आपके तरफ का रूपीया कातिक महीने के किस्ति का सीरकार में अब ताई आया नहि कीस्तबंदी का करार था सो चुग गया या बात (अ)सनेह को जोग्य नहिं रूपीया की ताकिद मुसदीयां को कराय जलदी से रूपीया भेज देना यामें आछा हैं

Through out the 1750s Marathas were facing opposition from the local Rajput chiefs in Jaipur territory as well as the Jaipur ruler had disappointed in payments of tribute but Marathas couldn't do anything more than issuing veiled and open threats as the period progressed. Due to the arrival of Abdali in Punjab Marathas moved out of Rajasthan around this time to tackle the Afghan menace. Thus till the Battle of Panipat on 14 January 1761 Jaipur Rajputs were let off without any direct military intervention from Holkars. Jayappa Shindes campaigns against Jodhpur and his murder by Rathore forces also seem to have diverted the attention of Holkar and Maratha forces from Jaipur.

Holkar Seeks Military Support from Jaipur

Holkar's correspondence also reveals Maratha sardars seeking military support from Jaipur ruler in their campaigns against other powers. However, responses from Jaipur side seem to have been not all that encouraging. When Malhar Rao started for the South to install Ghazi-ud-din Khan II from Delhi court on the seat of the Nizam of Hyderabad¹ as per the wishes of the Peshwa² he requested Jaipur ruler also to send forces to support Holkar and join the Maratha campaigns in the South.³ In fact both Malhar Rao and Jayaji Shinde wrote for military support on behalf of the Peshwa from Madho Singh in 1752.⁴ Holkar's representative Gangadhar Yashwant from Holkar side also wrote to Madho Singh reminding him of the wish of both the *Subedars* and the Peshwa to assemble and send a force to south in support of Peshwa's march to install Ghazi-ud-din Khan.⁵

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.121

² *Indore Kharita* No.33, Sawan Sudi 5, 1809/1752

...फौजरी दरकार जाणकर राजश्री दोनों सुबेदारजी ने आपको पत्र लिख भेजा है उणी प्रमाण आपने खातीर...फौजरी तयारी कर भेज देवोला अणी बात से दोनों सुबेदार जी री खुशी आर श्रीमंत पंडीत प्रधान जीरी भी बड़ी खुसी है सोहि आप करोला...

³ *Indore Kharita* No.43, Ashadh Badi 12, 1810/1753

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.34, Sawan Sudi 4, 1809/1752

...अणा दीना मों फौजरी दरकार है आप भी फौज सुधा सामील होणा लाईकछे आर श्रीमंतू जी के तरफ सों या बात बैई आप को लीखा पत्र आया हि होला तो अणा समया मों डीलाई फौज बंदी करीने पधारबो करोला डिला पधार वो न होवे तो आपरी फौज मातबर सरदार ठाकुर साथ देकर भेजबो करोला अणी बात से पंडीत प्रधान बौहत खुसी होंगे हम भी समाधान पावेंगे

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.33, Sawan Sudi 5, 1809/1752

And indeed these request had its impact on the Jaipur ruler as on another occasion Madho Singh did send military support to Marathas against the Jats at Kumbher in 1754.¹ When reinforcements were asked for by the Marathas, Jaipur ruler obliged as Raghunath Baji Rao confirmed the receipt of guns *Jarbat and Jejaila* (A swivel gun) as well as horses and men sent along with *Diwan* Hargovind Singh at Kumbher in 1754, here Holkars were engaging Surajmal Jat's forces and had lost Khanderao.

Holkars Relations with Jaipur after the Battle of Panipat

After the Battle of Panipat, Malhar Rao Holkar emerged as the leading Maratha *sardar* in Central India and North India. Being the senior most and most experienced among the Maratha sardars the duty of leading the Marathas on behalf of the Peshwa, in the areas beyond the Vindhya and Narmada River fell on him. In the campaigns organised to recover the areas lost to local chieftains of Rajasthan, Gangetic Doab, Malwa and Bundelkhand, Malhar's leadership paved the way for the revival of Maratha power.² "By April 1761, 40,000 thousand soldiers had regrouped under the Maratha banner in the Gwalior region and further south."³ Malhar Rao on return from Panipat stayed for a while at Gwalior rallying left out Maratha forces before heading towards his headquarter at Indore.⁴

Following the Marathas defeat at Panipat, Rajputs in Rajasthan sensed an opportunity to reassert their power in the areas dominated by the Marathas. Both big and small Rajput chieftains of Rajasthan became aggressive and began to reassert themselves to take back what they had lost to the Marathas during the earlier period.⁵ Chandawat Rajputs seized Rampura which was under Malhar Rao Holkar's domination; so was the case in the Kota territory where Abhay Singh Rathor an officer of the Maharao of Kota seized the fortalice of Gagon, driving

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.54, Jeth Badi 13, 1811/1754

...आपने दीवान जी राजा हरगोविंद जी के साथ तोफां, जरबात तथा जेजाइला तथा फवज घोड़ा असवार भजे सो आया आछि तरा से चाकरी करि माने बहुत रजावंत राख्यो

² *Selection From the Peshwa Daftar* (New Series): *Revival of the Maratha Power*, P M Joshi (edited), Vol.3, Bombay, 1962, See Introduction

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. 2, p.360

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.361

⁵ *SPD*, Vol.29, L. No.81; also See Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.361

out the Maratha collector.¹ Malhar Rao without losing much time set out to recapture the Maratha outposts on the border tracts between Malwa and Rajputana. Holkar reached these troubled spot in early May 1761. He even arranged reinforcements from Indore, the artillery ordered by him arrived from Indore.²

Earliest contact date in *kharita* records between the Marathas and the Jaipur ruler Madho Singh after the Battle of Panipat goes back to April-May 1761³ when Peshwa's representative Sadashiv Ramchandra wrote to Jaipur state in the month of Baisakh.

Madho Singh of Jaipur and many other Rajput chiefs such as those of Shahpura (Sopar), Bundi, Kota, Karauli and Khichi were all up against the Marathas. Seeing Marathas in a weakened position Madho Singh also sought help from Afghan chief Najib Khan and Shah Alam for the formation of an anti-Maratha coalition.⁴

Madho Singh had besieged Newai held by Maratha official Sadshiv Gopal and another Maratha official Keshav Rao was challenged in Keshori Patan area 12 miles north-east of Kota city in early November 1761.⁵ But Madho Singh's design to encroach upon Kota territory worked in favour of the Marathas, local Rajputs of Kota came to support for the Marathas. Malhar reached the site of action from Indore via Mukundra pass along with Shinde's contingent led by Khanaji Jadav and Chinto Krishna.⁶ Nearly 3,000 Rajput allies under Akheram Pancholi, *diwan* of Kota, the youthful Zalim Singh and the Rao Rajah's foster brother joined Holkar. Well equipped 10,000 strong Rajput (Jaipur) force led by Raj Singh initially made Marathas vacate some of their posts in the Hada country.⁷ Both the forces met at a spot between Mangrol, 35 miles north-east of Kota and Bhatwara (4 miles south of Mangrol). Rajputs were convincingly beaten.

After Rajput forces saw Marathas coming back strongly, the Jaipur's diwan Kanhiram immediately opened negotiations with Maratha sardars to settle the

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2 p.361

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.361, *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, V V Thakur(ed & compiled), Indore, 1944, Vol.1, L.No.161

³ *Indore Kharita*, No.79, Baisakh Badi 5, 1818/1761

⁴ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.362

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., P.363

⁷ Ibid.

dispute about the outstanding tribute. Agents of Jodhpur, Kota and Bundi also reached the Maratha camp.¹ Marathas were thus back in Rajasthan soon after their debacle in the Battle of Panipat. Once again Marathas began pressurising Jaipur for payment of dues. Malhar Rao Holkar asked Maratha *vakil* at Kota Lalaji Ballal Gulgule to press Jaipur representative (*diwan*) Kanhiram for immediate payment of the dues.²

However, Jaipur ruler was relieved from imminent Maratha threats as another front opened up for the Marathas to defend. It was now Bundelkhand where Emperor Shah Alam II and his wazir Shuja-ud-daulah captured Kalpi and Jhansi in the beginning of 1762(Jan-Feb).³ This provided relief to Rajputs as Marathas rushed to defend their possessions in Bundelkhand. Malhar Rao was wounded too by a bullet at the battle of Mangrol and was now unable to work in full capacity.⁴ Throughout the year 1762 and 1763 the Maratha power in the North was also paralysed by the diversion of Maratha forces in the South in the war against the Nizam.⁵

After the Battle of Panipat diplomatic ties between Holkar and Jaipur ruler remained cut off for almost five years. First letter in the Indore-Jaipur *kharita* written by House of Holkar to the Jaipur ruler after the Battle of Panipat has a gap of almost five years, the last letter in this series being of 1759⁶ and the next addressed by Malhar to Madho Singh is dated in the year 1764.⁷ Conflict at Mangrol in 1761 also delayed normalization of communication channels between the two sides. Only in 1764 Jaipur court sent their chieftains Raja Sahay and Raj Singh as representatives to Holkar's court showing resumption of diplomatic ties and a step towards normalization of relations.⁸ Malhar Rao also appointed his representative in the Jaipur court.⁹ In 1764 another official Brahmamurat Rao

¹ Ibid., p.364

² *Holkarshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, V V Thakur(ed) ,Vol.1, L.No.161

³ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, pp.364-365

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p.365

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 77, Magh Sudi 7, 1816/1759

⁷ *Indore Kharita* No. 82, Baisakh Badi 14, 1821/1764

...कागद राज का घणा दीना सु पंडित सीताराम वा जुगल कीशोर के साथ आया...

⁸ *Indore Kharita* No. 83, Jeth, Shukl 10, 1821/1764

⁹ *Indore Kharita* No. 84, Agahan Badi 10, 1821/1764

Harsukh, a loyal person associated with Holkar family for a long time, left for Jaipur with Holkars messages.¹

More openness and progress in diplomatic relations was seen in the year 1764, Malhar asked Madho Singh to protect *Seth Kewalram* whose father was brought to Jaipur by Sawai Jai Singh (*Bade Maharaj*) from Ujjain.² Malhar also asked about the business of another merchant Murar Seth Krishanji who was having a shop there.³ Here it is important to mention that both Jaipur and Malwa region must have had greater proximity during Sawai Jai Singh's period as *Subadar* of Malwa. And now those settled in Jaipur were at risk after the Battle of Panipat and consequent stand off between the two sides. Malhar was trying to address this problem by opening up the communication channels between the two sides. In 1764 Malhar wrote to Madho Singh for escorting the family & belongings of his men Baki Beg Khan and Khoje Saiyyad Mohammad from Jaipur to Bharatpur by providing escorts on the way.⁴ Malhar Rao himself also visited Jaipur region in October 1764 when he was in Jobner (13 miles east of Sambhar) in order to put pressure on Madho Singh for payment of long pending dues.⁵

Malhar also sent a detailed letter in 1764 mentioning arrears of tribute to be paid by the Jaipur court. This letter carries details of the Holkar's demand for the dues that were not paid since the Battle of Panipat.⁶ These dues also included expenditure made on maintenance of the Ranthambore Fort. Holkar demanded rupees 35 lakhs to be paid in annual instalments in the next 7 years. Immediate payment of rupees 10 lakhs was also demanded. This immediate payment consisted of rupees 4 lakhs in cash and the rest in three instalments of rupees 2 lakhs each in the coming months of the same year.

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 84, Agahan Badi 10, 1821/1764

² *Indore Kharita* No. 85, Posh Badi, 10, 1821/1764

...सेट केवलराम उठे रहेछे सो राज गौर प्रदाखत तो ठेठ सुं करते ही छो... दोनुत्रफ का सुभर्चीतकछे सो हर भांत गौर प्रदाखत राखोगे बडे महाराज यांके बापकुं उजेन से लाये थे सो बौहत अच्छी प्रितपाल करी अब उंही भांत राज नीभावोगे

³ *Indore Kharita* No. 85, Posh Badi 10, 1821/1764

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 86, Posh Sudi 12, 1821/1764

...बाकी बेगखान वा खोजे सैद महमद सरकार में नौकर रहे है इनके कबीले वगैरे सरंजाम जैपुर छे सो भरपुर... इनके कबीले वगैरे के लार बदरका दे भरतपुर पोहचाबा की ताकीद करोला

⁵ Sarkar, J N, *Fallof the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.366

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 87, Magh Sudi 8, 1821/1764

<i>Month of Payment</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Magh Sudi 1</i>	Rs 200000
<i>Fagun Sudi 15</i>	Rs 200000
<i>Aakhar*Ashad</i>	Rs 200000
<i>*Aakhar-By the end of</i>	

Rest of the amount of rupees 25 lakhs was to be paid in annual installments from the following year (1765). These installment payments were to be made twice in a year, half in summer (*Unhalu*) and half in the winter (*Siyalu*) season.¹

<i>Year</i>	<i>Amount(Rs)</i>
1822/1765	4, 25,000
1823/1766	4, 25,000
1824/1767	4, 25,000
1825/1768	4, 25,000
1826/1769	4, 00,000
1828/1771	4, 00,000

However, in the following year, Malhar Holkar's old age and recurring ill-health made a vigorous policy in Rajputana impossible till his demise in 1766.² He had been nursing a wound that he received when he was hit by a bullet at the battle of Mangrol in Nov. 1761 and the wound took a serious proportion making him go back to Indore from his campaigns in Bundelkhand in 1764, he had grown weak due to illness and was now unable to work in full capacity. Malhar's campaign against the Gohad Jats was his last in the long career as Peshwa's principal sardar in Central and North India. Gohad Jats were a difficult proposition for aging Malhar Rao Holkar and later even Raghunath Rao and Mahadji Shinde. The Bharatpur Jats too occupied the areas in northern Malwa where Maratha had their outposts. Since Gohad Jats were in close proximity lying across the Chambal River and also enjoyed brotherly relations with the Bharatpur Jats; for the Marathas it became difficult to dislodge Gohad Jats from the area so long as Bharatpur Jats were strong.

¹ *Indore Kharita* No., 87, Magh, Sudi 8, 1821/1764

² Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, p.365

Marathas sought military support from the Jaipur state against their common enemy the Jats of Bharatpur with whom the Jaipur ruler was also in conflict in 1766.¹ Marathas sought against the Jats as Jaipur ruler was also in conflict with the Jats. Jats had entered all over Northern Malwa and Bundelkhand in the 1760s as they took advantage of Maratha weakness after their defeat in the Battle of Panipat. Seeing the position of the Jats getting stronger in North Malwa, in 1766 Malhar asked Madho Singh² for military support when local Jat chief Nahar Singh who happened to be the brother of Jawahar Singh was dispossessed of his Dhaulpur stronghold by the latter and his family was homeless.³ Dhaulpur, chief Nahar Singh's family sought refuge with Jaipur ruler and the Marathas for safely lodging his family in a fortified place when Jawahir Singh approached Dhaulpur to capture the place.⁴ English agents report Nahar Singh brother of Jawahar Singh's presence in the Maratha camp with a small army.⁵

Malhar Rao Holkar himself marched towards Dhaulpur when Nahar Singh sought his help. Holkar sent a 10,000 strong contingent in advance under SultANJI Labhate, Santaji Bable and Govind Rao Bule.⁶ Holkar forces captured Dhaulpur in March 1766.⁷

Holkar and Jaipur ruler came closer on account of the growing power of their common enemy, the Jats of Bharatpur, in the period following the Battle of

¹ *Foreign Department Records*, National Archive of India (henceforth NAI), New Delhi, SC 1766(27)

² *Indore Kharita* No.89, Chaitra Badi 10, 1822/1765

...राज अपनी फौज कामां की तरफ ताकीद सु भेजोगे...

³ *Indore Kharita* No.93, Margashir, Badi 12, 1822/1765; *Indore Kharita* No. 98, Ashad Badi 3, 1823/1766

...महाराव नाहर सींघ जी ह्या पास आये... और महाराव जी का कबीला के वासते ग्वालेर में राखने की लीखी थी पणा यांके चीत्त में न आई हाल राज पास भेजा छे और ये ह्या पास छे राज के घर की बड़ा बड़ां सु जो रीतछे तीपर नजर कर यां की बदनपुरा में हवेली छे सो खाली कराय देवा की गौर राखोला हमैं तो राज के सलाह माफक यांके वास्ते सब बात बीचार लीनीछे

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.93, Margashir, Badi 12, 1822/1765; *Indore Kharita* No. 98, Ashad Badi 3, 1823/1766

⁵ *Foreign Department Records*, National Archive of India (henceforth NAI), New Delhi, SC 1766(27), the English Agents report reads... Nahar Singh the brother of Jawahar Singh is in the Mahratta Camp with a small army...

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No.89, Chaitra Badi 10 1822/1765; *SPD (New Series)*, Vol.3, p.8, Malhar sent a detachment 15,000 horsemen

⁷ *SPD (New Series)*, P M Joshi (ed.), Introduction, p. 8.

Panipat. Malhar kept Jaipur ruler updated about his military campaigns in Jat areas in the year 1765. Also while marching for Gwalior and Gohad he kept Madho Singh informed about his campaigns in Malwa and Bundelkhand, and his plans to capture the *mamlats* of Jhansi fort, Bondsawa (probably Vidisa) and Datia in the region.¹

After the death of Malhar Rao Holkar on 26th May 1766² his grandson Malrao Holkar too sought cooperation from Madho Singh in finding a suitable place for Nahar Singh Jat and his family.³ Malrao sent the Jat chief to Jaipur territory asking the Jaipur ruler to make arrangements for his safe stay in his territory. Moreover, the bitterness in relations that had developed after Panipat on Maratha side seemed to be getting over as in his correspondence Malrao also reminded Jaipur ruler of Jaipur Maratha relationship going to several generations.⁴ However, Malrao didn't live long. He died the very next year on 27th March 1767. The English Agents from Allahabad report Madho Singh's support to the Marathas against the combined forces of the Jats and the Sikhs in 1768.

*...A severe war is now carrying on between the Jats assisted by the Sikhs on one side and Madhousing with the Marathas on the other. When these powers are disengaged there's no knowing...*⁵

Malrao's demise (1767) only nine months after the death of Malhar Rao Holkar (1766) and further the death of Madho Singh in 1768 must have created a temporary void in Jaipur-Holkar Relations as both sides were headed by new leadership in 1767-68. Prithvi Singh was the new Jaipur ruler. After successive death in Holkar Family definitely it was time when Jaipur-Holkar relationship was bound to have a new beginning with Ahilyabai taking charge of the Holkar Family.⁶ There are six letters (within a span of 8 months) in 1768 sent by Tukoji Holkar who took over as Holkar's military commander to Prithvi Singh which just carries routine goodwill messages, showing there was a halt in diplomatic ties on both sides in the past and now Holkars were making a new beginning. And

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.92, Kartik, Sudi, 7 1822/1765

² *Indore Kharita* No.97, Jeth,(date not clear, damaged document), 1823/1766

³ *Indore Kharita* No.98, Ashad, Badi 3, 1823/1766

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Foreign Department Records*, NAI, SC, Feb.19,1768 (14, 127-128, 15, 212-14)

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 101, Chaitra, Sudi 3, 1824/1767

probably Tukoji was trying to fill the void created by successive deaths in the Holkar family by dispatching goodwill messages in these trying times.¹ Soon after Ahilyabai Holkar became the head of the Holkar family and Prithvi Singh became the ruler of Jaipur, there was reduction in open hostility. As the power of the Holkar Family in the North came under the shadows of Mahadji Shinde their correspondences now avoided the veiled and open threats of earlier times giving way to simple protests for payments of tribute and settlement of disturbed areas claimed by Holkars.

Ahilyabai's military commander Tukoji Holkar was now in charge of external affairs of the House of Holkars with Ahilyabai in overall control of the affairs of the House of Holkar. In 1767 Tukoji Holkar wrote to the Jaipur ruler protesting the settlement of pargana Tonk and Rampura by the Jaipur state and asked him to make his officials to allow Pandit Sadashiv Gopal to settle and control above *parganas* on behalf of Holkar.²

In the ongoing fight against the Jats by the Jaipur ruler around this time, Holkars extended support to the Jaipur forces and Tukoji wrote to Madho Singh about the Marathas ongoing campaigns against the Jats in Malwa and Bundelkhand and asked for their support too. "In the past few days fight between Jat and your forces have been reported, so quickly get ready with a big force and field guns to counter the same, this also is the wish of the Peshwa" read the letter from Tukoji to the Jaipur ruler.³

Later too, Tukoji Holkar expressed solidarity with Jaipur state when news of the defeat of the Jat forces at the hands of the Jaipur forces was narrated. As he wrote, "Jats had misbehaved with Malhar Rao Holkar too and so now they were suffering".⁴ Marathi sources confirm this too, on 14th Dec 1767 "Jawahar Singh Jat

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 110, Paush, Sudi 14, 1825/1768; *Indore Kharita* No. 111, Phalgun, Badi 12, 1825/1768; *Indore Kharita* No. 112, Chaitra, Sudi 7, 1826/1769; *Indore Kharita* No. 113, Baisakh, Badi 13, 1826/1769; *Indore Kharita* No. 114, Jeth, Sudi 7, 1826/1769; *Indore Kharita* No. 115, Sawan, Sudi 1, 1826/1769

² *Indore Kharita* No.103, Jeth, Badi 5, 1824/1767

³ *Indore Kharita* No.105 A &B, Margashar, Sudi 9, 1824/1767

...या दीना में जाट को वा राज के फौज को कजीयो सुनवा में आयो जीसुं मनोरथ याही छे जो भारी फौज वा तोप खानासु सीताब राजसुं सामील होय... श्रीमंत पंडित प्रधान जी की मरजीयाहीछे...

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.106 A, Magh, Sudi 1, 1824/1767

was attacked by the Jaipur ruler and was defeated at Maonda near Marnol on their border with the Jaipur state.”¹

“We have dispatched our forces towards your territory and our forces along with those of Mahadji Shinde are also marching quickly and on an auspicious day we are going to reach near Narmada,” this report was sent to Jaipur when Peshwa sent Tukoji and Mahadji from South to reinforce Maratha frontline against the Jats, towards the end of 1767.² From another *kharita* issued in January 1768 it becomes clear that Peshwa ordered not only Tukoji Holkar and Mahadji Shinde but also Raje Bahadur, Vithal Shivdeo, Trimbak Shivdeo and Khanderao Pawar to march to North against the Jats.³

Here it is also important to point out that Tukoji seems to be looking after the affairs of Holkar state with Jaipur when he along with Ahilyabai had taken over the Holkar affairs after the death of Malhar Rao. Ahilya Bai herself was concentrating on domestic affairs pertaining to their holdings in Malwa and Khandesh in Central India. It was Tukoji who communicated on regular basis with Prithvi Singh⁴ and staked Holkars claims within Jaipur’s boundaries as he put forward the case of pargana Tonk and Rampura that was under dispute.⁵

Tukoji Holkar was at the helm of the external affairs of the House of Holkar is further proved by the letter written to Prithvi Singh where he endorses the solidarity shown by Jaipur state with Najib Khan and says that since long time Najib, Jaipur state and House of Holkar were united.⁶

However, from the start of 1770s Ahilyabai also started taking interest in the external affairs of the Holkar family. She herself wrote to Prithvi Singh about resistance shown by Rajput zamindars (*Bhaums*) in the Jaipur territory. *Kharita*

...जाट के वा राज के फौजसुं राडि हुई और जाट ने सिकस्त खाय मारया पडया का समाचार... मालुम हुआ जीसुं घणी खुस्याली हुई जाटने कैलासबासी वा राजसुं घणी बेमरजादकी इथीजी को फल आछो पायो...

¹ *SPD(New Series)*, P M Joshi(ed.), See Introduction, p.12, and also L. No.139; *Indore Kharita* No.106 A, Magh, Sudi 1, 1824/1767

² *Indore Kharita* No.106 B, Magh, Sudi 1, 1824/1767

³ *SPD(New Series)*, P M Joshi (ed.), Vol.3, See Introduction, p.12, and also L. No.145

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 128, Ashwin Sudi 3, 1827/1770

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No. 129, Kartik Budi 7, 1827/1770

...प्रगणाटोंक रामपुरा का भटजी वा रावतजीकुं लीखाछे सो मुफसिल जाहर करेगें ती मुजब ताकीद कराबा में आवेगी...

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 121, Asoj, Sudi 10, 1826/1769

sent by Ahilyabai read, “In pargana Tonk and Rampura *kamavisdar* Pandit Rangoji has been appointed but the Rajput *bhaums* don’t allow settlement of areas in a efficient manner so we have written, so inform all Rajput zamindars (*Bhaumi*) and allow our settlement in the above pargana.¹

There is a clear dividing line in Maratha politics in Rajasthan and Hindustan which could be placed around this time that is 1770. Men who had dominated the political scene in the decade (1750s) before and after the battle of Panipat (1760s) like Suraj Mal, Malhar Rao Holkar and Madho Singh of Jaipur had departed giving way to a new generation of leaders. And there was revival of Maratha Power in Central India and even in Rajasthan and *Doab* areas under Tukoji Holkar and Mahadji Shinde.²

Marathas had come a long way in their attempt to have a foothold here in Rajasthan and surrounding areas from the days in the 1730s and 1740s when Rajputana tracts were unfamiliar for the Maratha sardars and their followers. 1760s were tough times for both Shinde and Holkars as they rose in the face of stiff resistance from the local groups –the Jats, Rajpoots, Bundelas and Afghans and made a strong comeback after the Battle of Panipat.

1770s onwards politics in the North was complicated and fast paced compared to the earlier period. Shinde and Holkar made alliances with local power groups for penetrating deeper in the Hindustan region. Their growing military power drew local Rajput chiefs of Rajasthan to their side; Kota ruler and Macheri chief were keen to join hands with Marathas to fulfill their territorial ambitions.

Kota on the Malwa-Rajasthan border came up as a strategic Maratha base for regulating Maratha affairs in Rajasthan and Delhi-Agra region. Kota was a safe base for the Marathas because of local chief Zalim Singh’s close association with Shindes. Very often Marathas halted here on way to their destination both from Malwa and from the North. Ramchandra Ganesh and Visaji Krishna wrote to Prithvi Singh from their camp in Delhi in 1770 to escort Vaid Raj Shri Ganga Bhishan ji who was in Jaipur and was on way to Peshwa’s court at Poona, to be

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 130, Margashir Badi 1, 1827/1770

...परगना टोंक, रामपुरा म कामासदार पंडित रंगोजी भेजेहंसो प्रगना मजकुर मा रजपुत भौमे अमल दखलगीरी अछी तरह से देते नहीं ते वासत राजकुं लीखां हां सो सब रजपुत भोमी... ताकीद कराव.. सरकार का आमल अछी तरह से चाल सो करागां...

² See Chapter 3

escorted up to Kota, by providing troops as escort.¹ In the Jaipur-Maratha ties Kota served as important physical link. Maratha army while serving in the North no more depended on supplies from Ujjain and Indore in Malwa. Supplies whether arms or ammunitions or Food grain, were being locally arranged from the hinterland of Kota. Marathas had arms depot and factory at Kota too.

During the 1770s Holkars were being left behind by Mahadji Shinde in the North Indian politics. Holkar's relationship with Jaipur state during these years seems to have been losing their earlier priority, as their power in the North was on decline. Close personal ties seemed to be developing between the new Holkar leadership and the Jaipur ruler Prithvi Singh. Tukoji shared the news of the death of Narayanrao with Prithvi Singh² and Ahilyabai wanted to communicate with the Jaipur state more often as she asked Prithvi Singh as to why there was no letter or news from Jaipur side since a long time.³ Also around this time there are numerous *kharitas* inviting Jaipur ruler and his family on occasion of marriages in the Holkar Family.⁴ Invitation to Jaipur ruler in their marriages reflected heightened position of Holkars too. Tukoji invited Pratap Singh along with his family for the marriage of his son Malhar Rao Holkar at Wafgaon with the family of Shri Sultanrao Lambhate.⁵

Later Tukoji Holkar wrote to Prithvi Singh inviting him on the occasion of the engagement ceremony (*Lagan*) of Chiranjeev Rao Khanderao Phanse⁶ Gifts were also exchanged. On the occasion of the crowning ceremony (*Tika*)⁷ of Prithvi Singh Tukoji dispatched horses and elephants and other items to Jaipur along with his representatives⁸ Clothes were sent on the occasion of the marriage in the Jaipur

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 133, Posh Badi 1, 1827/1770; Also see HK No. 134, Chaitra Sudi 1, 1828/1771 where there is a similar request by Tukoji; and *Indore Kharita* No. 135, Chaitra Sudi 1, 1828/1771

² *Indore Kharita* No.164, Asoj Sudi 1 1830/1773

³ *Indore Kharita* No. 140, Ashad Sudi 3, 1828/1771

...कागद समाचार आये दीन बोहोत हुवे सो या बात सनेहसु नीपट दुर हे अब हमेसे कागद समाचार लीखावते रहोगे

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 165, Margarshar(Agahan) Badi 13 Sudi 1, 1830/1773

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.190, Paush, Badi 10, 1838/1781

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No. 175, Fagun, Badi 5, 1832/1775

⁷ *Indore Kharita* No.119, Kunwar Badi 7, 1826?

⁸ *Indore Kharita* No. 118, Bhadon, Sudi 14, 1826/1769

royal family too¹ Also Maratha officials visiting the Jaipur court were given ceremonial welcome according to their status.²

Moreover, Marathas seem to be promoting business and socio-cultural contacts at the highest level in Jaipur territory even though situation was not conducive. In such matters they were taking Jaipur court into confidence. It seems the highways were not safe and there were requests for safe passage by providing escorts for merchants & traders, pilgrims and other persons linked to Holkar household.

Tukoji Holkar wrote to Prithvi Singh in 1774 about Manohar Das Sahukar of *Kasba* Indore who sent clothes and other items to the shop of Icharam Baikunth located in *Kasba* Jaipur, but in a theft those items worth rupees 1500 were taken away, now he asked Jaipur ruler to alert their *faujdar* and retrieve those items.³

Ahilyabai Holkar wrote to local Rajput chief Umed Singh of Bundi about camels with clothes being sent for Tukoji from Lashkar (Gwalior) and wanted his assistance in safe passage of the said items through Bundi.⁴

For Holkars and Marathas in general Rajasthan also happened to be a major source for purchase of camels and horses from market and fair grounds in Rajgarh, Patan and other places, Holkars were sourcing horses and camels from here even before the Battle of Panipat.⁵

Holkars face Resistance and Disturbance within Jaipur Territory

Holkars regularly confronted Jaipur ruler and its local elite over the matters of tribute and other backlog dues as per the terms of agreements. Situation before Battle of Panipat and after was not much different. Regularity with which *kharita* records raises the issue of tribute payment with the successive Jaipur ruler whether it is Madho Singh in 1750s and 1760s, Prithvi Singh in late 1760s and 1770s or with his successor Pratap Singh in 1780s and 1790s confirms the fact that Holkar were constantly pressurising Jaipur State for money but were unable to do much against Jaipur's delaying tactics. Success to the Holkars in converting those

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 152, Chaitra Sudi 1, 1828/1771

² *Dastur Dikhni* documents under *Dastur Kaumvar* series preserved in the Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner

³ *Indore Kharita* No.171, Baisakh Badi 9, 1831/1774

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.146, Kartik Sudi 4, 1828/1771

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.80, Posh (date not mentioned), 1818/1761

requests into actual payments was very little. Often tactical measures were adopted by the Jaipur side to delay payments.

As in the 1750s and 1760s, Holkar continued to face resistance and disturbance in areas claimed by them within Jaipur territory. Holkar's correspondences have many incidences to substantiate Rajput resistance to Holkar domination in the Jaipur region. Ahilyabai wrote to Prithvi Singh about resistance shown by Rajput *bhaums* in 1770. "In pargana Tonk and Rampura *kamavisdar* Pandit Rangoji has been appointed but the Rajput *bhaums* don't allow settlement by Maratha officials, so we have written, so inform all Rajput *bhaumi* and allow our settlement in the above pargana.¹ Tukoji also repeatedly wrote in 1771 about disturbances being created in Holkar's possessions in pargana Tonk and Rampura as reported by Holkar official Sadshiv Bhatt and asked Jaipur ruler to control them from doing so.² In yet another case during the year 1771, Tukoji Holkar asked Prithvi Singh about disputes between Holkar official Raja Sadashiv and local Rajputs in *mauje* Paraana of Pargana Tonk as it was reported by Holkar officials in 1771.³

Tukoji reported to Prithvi Singh in 1777 about *mauje* Thikariya in Pargana Toda given to Pandit Gobindrao Munshi in *inam*, "Recently we have come to know that Toda's *Amil* (*amaldar*) has seized the ownership right of the said village from Pandit Gobindrao" and requested restoration of the earlier position of the Pandit.⁴ Holkar's *kamavisdars* of pargana Tonk and Rampura reported disturbance in their areas in 1779 which Tukoji again asked Pratap Singh to stop.⁵

It seems from the late 1770s Holkar family started losing grip over their possessions in Jaipur due to their own weaknesses, their rivalry with Shinde could

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 130, Magashir, Badi 1, 1827/1770

² *Indore Kharita* No. 132, Posh Badi 1, 1827/1770 also see *Indore Kharita* No. 137, Chaitra Sudi 7, 1828/1771 where Tukoji again conveys the report of Sadashiv Bhatt on this matter

...प्रगने टोंक रामपुरा में सुलतानोत वागेरे फैल फीतुर करेछे सो मुफसिल सारी हकीकत श्री भठजी हैं लीखी सो जाहर करसी तीमाफक सारी हैं ताकीद कराय देवा में आवे जो दोनु प्रगना में कोई फेल फीतुर करबा न पावे

³ *Indore Kharita* No. 144, month in Marathi, 1828/1771

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.179, Posh Sudi 1, 1834/1777

...मौजे ठीकरी या परगना तोडा का गांव बड़े महाराज ने पंडित गोवींदराव मुनसीकु इनाम कर दीया है... हाल जाह हुवा हे जो तोडा के अमलदार ने वा गांव का मसारनीले का अमल बंद करी जपती करी है...

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.183, Kartik Sudi 10, 1836/1779

also be a reason, as Shindes were growing stronger everyday in the North specially on the borders of Rajasthan with Kota as base. Local Rajputs must have realised this while dealing with Holkar's officials in their area. Incidence of confrontation and resistance to their presence began to be reported more often now than earlier period. Tukoji Holkar wrote to Pratap Singh, the new Jaipur ruler in 1780 about disturbance in pargana Tonk and reprimanded him.¹

Even Mahadji Shinde put pressure over the Jaipur chief to give up control over the areas claimed by Holkar. In fact matters came to a point where veiled threats were issued to the ruler of Jaipur. Correspondence from Mahadji to Pratap Singh declared occupation of Tonk and Rampura as unlawful and asked him to vacate the areas to have a healthy relation else he would face trouble.² Mahadji again wrote to Pratap Singh asking him to remove forces or else he would also send his forces to settle the issue.³

However, Jaipur Rajputs continued to create trouble for the Holkars. Again there was disturbance and attack on Maratha posts in pargana Tonk and Rampura as well as villages in Toda and Malpura parganas, Tukoji wanted Pratap Singh to take action and restore power to Maratha official (*Mokasdar*) Gobind.⁴ From such incidence of defiance by Jaipur Rajputs against the Holkars it is evident that in the 1780s and 1790s Holkar's overall position in Rajasthan was getting weakened; they were now also under the shadow of Mahadji Shinde's military build up in the region. Incidences of resistance from Jaipur side were reported many a times but Holkars could do no more than reprimanding the Jaipur ruler. No military action was initiated by Ahilyabai or Tukoji Holkar against Jaipur.

From 1787 to 1797 Holkar's establishments in Rajasthan came under pressure once again. Setback to Shinde led Maratha forces at Lalsot in 1787

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.185, Ashad Badi 5, 1837/1780

...सुनबा में आया जो राज के तरफ से परगने टोंक के अमल में खलल कर तरह तरह को फीतुर हुवो इ बात सु घणो ही आचरज हुवो...

² *Gwalior Kharita* No. 75, Sawan Sudi 4, 1836/1779

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 76, Sawan Sudi 10, 1836/1779

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.186, Asoj Sudi 3, 1837/1780

...कमीने आदमी के सलाह सुं ह्यां के तालुके परगने टोंक वा रामपुरा और तोडा मालपुरा के गांव मं खलसकर नुकसान कियो... दोनों परगना में... गांवा में मुकासदार अगसु भेजे हैं यांका अमल दखल कराय देवोला... मुकासदार मालराव गोविंद इनका अमल दखल कराय देवाला

against the combined Rajput forces led to widespread resistance against Maratha presence in the region. So it was even later as death of Mahadji Shinde in 1794 affected overall Maratha position in Hindustan region. Also during this period relations between Shinde and Holkar were severely strained over distribution of territories conquered in the North which must have encouraged local Rajput to oppose Holkar establishments in Jaipur territory. Holkar's agent Laxman Rao Anant and Rao Jagannath Ram Bahadur warned Jaipur ruler against reported march of Jaipur forces in the *taluka* of Lakshmangarh in support of the local chief (*rao raja*). Holkars were dominating over the local chieftain's locality and threatened with retaliation in case Jaipur forces moved in that area.¹

In *pargana* Tonk too there were disturbances against Holkars as local Rajput *zamindars* supported by Jaipur forces opposed Maratha presence in 1795.² Death of Ahilya Bai in 1795 was another blow to Holkars. In 1796 Holkar's agents Laxman Anant and Jagannath Ram Bahadur wrote to Pratap Singh about disturbance created by zamindars and revenue officials in *pargana* Tonk and asked him to stop them³

All effort was made by Tukoji to maintain their domination over *pargana* Tonk. The local Maratha *mamlatdar* Pandurang Shivaji was transferred by Tukoji and a new person Kripal Singh Sikh appointed in his place to handle the *pargana*.⁴ In fact it appears that Tukoji was taking hasty measures to maintain Maratha hold in Tonk.

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 294, Jeth Sudi 5, 1852/1795

...सुनिवामैं आयौ कें राज का तरफू सुं फौज का पलटन लछिमनगढ तालुके राव राजा के तरफू आइछै सो राव राजा मजकूर सरकार कौछै वाके तालुके सै राज कोइ तरे खलस न करौला जौ कदाचि खलस करौगे तौ सवारी वा तरफू आवसी

² *Indore Kharita* No. 293, Baisakh Badi 13, 1852/1795

...राज के तरफू के कामदारनै चोलु वगैर दो मौजे जपत करलीये अर परगने टौक इलाका हुलकर के वामै खलस करैछै अवार सुनिवे मं आयौ के कंपु राज के तरफू का टौक नै गया छै सो यह बात जोग्य नही (सो जो करार मारफत करनैल बहादुर के) कामदारा नैतागीदकरावसी के कोइ बात का परगनै मजकुर मै खलस करै नही सरकार का मुकदमा वा हुलकर सौ येक छै

³ *Indore Kharita* No. 298, Shrawan Badi 2, 1853/1796

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No. 299, Bhadon Sudi 12, 1853/1796 & *Indore Kharita* No.300 Kartik Sudi 1, 1853/1796

Holkars also reported to Pratap Singh about loss of control over another area Cholu and another village nearby.¹ The damages and disturbances in Churu and Pipalu by the local zamindars (*Bhomias*) continued even in 1796 as they were opposed to the presence of the Maratha representative in their locality.²

Next Tukoji also transferred the *vakil* serving at Jaipur court and in place reappointed Mehta Chabilram in 1797.³ However, the problem in payment of tribute for the *mamlat* under Holkar's control continued.⁴ Defiance in payment of tribute was followed by further retaliatory acts by Jaipur authorities against Holkars. In such an incidence when a *hundi* of Girdharilal *Sahukar* (Banker) was to be exchanged at Jaipur, the local Maratha agent assisting the banker was asked to pay *nazarana*.⁵ This was the year Tukoji too died leaving the House of Holkar in complete disorder, especially in the North.

SHINDES PRESENCE IN JAIPUR STATE

Shindes like Holkar vied for domination and control over the crucial pockets within Jaipur territory after their participation in the succession dispute between Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh during the period 1746 -1751. Bundi and Kota chiefs first came under Maratha domination in early 1738. Peshwa Bajirao visited Kota in February 1738, local Hada ruler fled away to Gagron Fort. Later Kota chief agreed to pay 10 lakhs rupees as tribute (*khandani*) to Peshwa.⁶ Within Rajasthan Hadauti region falling on the borders of Malwa was looked after Ranoji Shinde and Malhar Rao Holkar on behalf of the Marathas after their victory over the Mughal forces in the Battle of Bhopal in 1738. After Bajirao's death in 1740, Maratha military contingent invaded Rajasthan almost every year. In Ranoji's

¹ *Indore Kharita* No. 293, Baisakh Badi 13, 1852/1795

² *Indore Kharita* No. 300, Kartik Sudi 1, 1853/1796

³ *Indore Kharita* No.303, Chaitra Sudi 1, 1854/1797

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.304, Sawan Badi 2, 1854/1797

⁵ *Indore Kharita* No.306, Bhadon Sudi 15, 1854/1797

...गिरधारीलाल साहुकार के हुंडी बावत रुपैया दिलावा वास्तै राज नै लिखीछी सो... खासीराम गुमास्तौ साह मजकूर रौछै सो सुनवा मैं आयौ के राज के मुसदी गुमास्ते मजकूर सू नजरानौ मागे है...

⁶ *SPD*, Vol.15, L No.68/6-2-1738

...पंत प्रधान स्वामी समागमें कोटया प्रांतास आलो. कुली परगणा लुटून नेस्तनाबूद केला. तेव्हां कोटेकर महाराव हाडा गडगांगरूणीस पळोन गेला... खंडणी रुपये दहा लक्ष द्यावे ऐसा करार केला...

period Maratha forces worked towards establishing their hold over Kota area, Shinde also appointed his revenue collector (*kamavisdars*) in different localities in and around Kota and Bundi. But not much is known about Ranoji's direct relation with Rajput rulers, especially Sawai Jai Singh or Ishwari Singh as he left the scene quite early due to his demise in 1745. However Ranoji was keen to settle territories near by Kota given in assignment to Shindes by the Peshwa. Gulgule records describes Shindes instructions to Kota *kamavisdar* Balaji Yashwant Gulgule regarding how to settle the territories that Peshwa had assigned them.¹ Kota during this period emerged as a local Maratha base.

Affairs of the House of Shinde after the death of Ranoji Shinde were managed by his eldest son Jayappa Shinde. It was during his time that the Marathas had the opportunity to make a formal entry into Rajasthan. As we have already described Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh invited Maratha support to claim Jaipur throne and finally it was Madho Singh who took over as Jaipur ruler after Ishwari Singh committed suicide in 1750. Jayappa Shinde's forces suffered maximum damages during the massacre in the Jaipur city in the year 1751.

Jayappa Shinde's relations with Jaipur State from the early 1750s immediately after the taking over of Madho Singh as ruler, is the starting point for Shindes relations with the Kachawaha Rajputs. Gwalior- Jaipur *kharitas* that we make use of this study of Shindes relations with Jaipur State are collection of Shindes dispatches to the Jaipur court numbering around 200. It is continuous for the whole of the period of the second half of the 18th century starting from the early 1750s.

Shindes like Holkar opened a regular communication channel after the negotiations with Madho Singh following the massacre of the Maratha forces in the Jaipur city in 1751.² Jayappa followed up the issue of payments regularly. The two sides now started communicating with each other on question of tribute payment and control over territories. Madho Singh's resistance to Maratha demands continued even later after the negotiations were over. The open hostility against the Marathas also seems to have encouraged resistance in other parts of Jaipur territory. Madho Singh tried to capture Bundi and Nerve by allying with

¹ *Shindeshahi Itihasachi Sadhne*, Phalke, A B(ed.), Vol.1, No.17, 18, 24,26,29,30, 31, 32.

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.154, Sawan Badi 14, 1808/1751

local chief Kishan Singh Hada.¹ Shinde's letter in the middle of the year 1751 reprimanded Madho Singh for making encroachments in prant Bundi and Nenne (Nainwa) – claiming them as Shinde's territory.² Madho Singh nevertheless remained quite opposed to Maratha presence on the frontiers of Jaipur territory with Bundi and Kota.

However, both sides kept the diplomatic channels open. They had their representative placed in each others court/camp and regular diplomatic ties were the order of the day, a practice that probably began with Jayappa Shinde's participation in Jaipur succession dispute. In the earlier period it seems Sawai Jai Singh communicated directly with Shahu and Peshwa and not his sardars.

Jayappa Shinde expressed friendship and cooperation (even after his troops had suffered maximum damages in the bloody massacre in the Jaipur city only a year back) with Jaipur ruler so long as Madho Singh promised to 'pay tribute in time.'³ Even he asked for military support and cooperation from Jaipur ruler in the campaign against Rathores of Jodhpur in 1754-55, while campaigning against them at Rupnagar and Merta.⁴ But till Jayappa was alive, it seems Madho Singh only fed him with false assurances of sending *hundis* for the tribute payments and for the other dues.⁵

Jayappa's career was cut short in the Marwar campaign on 25th July 1755 as he was murdered by Rathore forces after he had made a derogatory remark

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.155, Jeth Sudi 7, 1808/1751

...आपकी भीर भार ने नेणवां के तरफू जाणहार छे और श्री कृष्णसींघजी को भी आपने बुलाबों भेजा है जैपुर आप पास आयेछे सो सुणा तो प्रांत बुंदी वा नेणवा तो हमारी खास जागीरछे उधरी कुच ही खीचलकरना आपकु मुनासीब नहीछे प्रांत मजकुर मो कुच बात सों आपके तरसों खतरा होगा

² Ibid.

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.156, Kunwar Sudi 13, 1808/1751; *Gwalior Kharita* No .157, Kunwar Badi 13, 1809/1752

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.158, Kartik Badi 7, 1811/1754; *Gwalior Kharita* No.161, Jeth Sudi 5, 1812/1755

...रूपनगर फौज सीताब सों भेजी जो ईवास्ते कोई को उसवास करोमती...

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.157, Kunwar Badi 13 1809/1752

...माहाराज ने लीखी जो करार माफीक रूपीयां की नीसां की हुंडीयां वा फौज श्री दीवान कन्हिराम जी के लार देर सीताब ही भेजांछा सो आप यां बात बीचारीछे तो बोहत भलीछे...

against them.¹ His son Jankoji Shinde was immediately proclaimed as chief of the Shinde's army just after the murder of the Shinde chief at Nagore.² Dattaji Shinde brother of Jayappa who was then in Rajasthan only, also joined and acting as Jankoji's guardian saved the situation before any further damages could be done by the Rathore forces.

After the negotiations with Marwar ruler in 1755, Jankoji turned his attention on Jaipur ruler, asking him for payment of tribute. Jankoji figures regularly in Shindes correspondences with the Jaipur ruler right up to 1759. Shinde chief was communicating with Jaipur ruler on day to day affairs and even acknowledged receipt of horses and other gifts sent by Jaipur court indicating improvement in mutual ties to some degree.³ In 1756 Jankoji even asked Jaipur ruler to provide protection to the Jodhpur prince Ram Singh staying at Naraina from Bijay Singh of Jodhpur.⁴

Jaipur ruler was also asked to handover Ajmer and 12 villages of Borade area in Ajmer's neighbourhood to Shinde's official Govindrao⁵ by Kedarji and Mahadji Shinde. Kedarji was son of Tukoji Shinde another son of Ranoji Shinde who had died earlier and Mahadji Shinde acted as his guardian.

Jayappa's death in 1755 brought other members of Shinde family to the forefront of Maratha affairs in the North. Along with Dattaji and Jankoji it was Kedarji and Mahadji Shinde who now started getting involved in Shinde's dealings with Jaipur state as several *kharitas* refer to them communicating with the Jaipur

¹ See full detail of the Maratha campaign led by Jayappa Shinde in Sarkar, *Fall of The Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, pp.120-133

² Ibid., p.127

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.160, Sawan Sudi 2 , 1812/1755; *Gwalior Kharita* No.163, Baisakh Badi 14, 1813/1756

...पत्र राज को आयो सो तीरथरूपजी को नांव सो आयो थो सो पायों केतेक स्नेह सो लीखो थो तो आगों हीसों स्नेहेछे सो की ही वृद्धी करना परस्पर ... और घोड भैंट वागैरे भेजो सो पायाछे... हमेसा खत पत्र भेजा करोला...

...पत्र भेजों सो पायो केतेक स्नेहस्यों लीख्यों सो आठां उठां को व्योहवार सब येक ही जाणोला जुदाई जाणीयोमती

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 163, Baisakh Badi 14, 1813/1756

...श्री महाराजा जी श्री रामसींघजी... मातबर स्यों खलीते भेजें सों तीणं सों पोंहोंचांयांछां पीछों सों राजा जी के मातबर आदमी राज पास आये पोंहोंचेंगें।

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.162, Phalgun Sudi 1, 1812/1755

ruler.¹ After transfer of Ajmer area to Shinde following the negotiations with the Rathore ruler in 1755, both Kedarji and Mahadji also wrote to the Jaipur ruler Madho Singh in the same year (1755) to handover *mauje* Borade's 12 villages too, as in old times it was a part of Ajmer *Taluka*.²

In the year 1758 Jankoji Shinde pressed for immediate payment of rupees 3 lakhs tribute due from the Jaipur ruler Madho Singh as there was no money left with him for expenditure.³ He was demanding payments of an instalment of rupees 3 lakhs of winter season which had been due as per the agreement.⁴ Troops were also dispatched led by Potdar Bapuji Nayak to collect this amount. Madho Singh was asked to manage the money from the bankers (*sahukar*) and pay as soon as possible.⁵ Clearly this was the period when Shinde leaders were facing acute shortage of money. Moreover, it was empty coffer at Poona court that was adding to their problem as Peshwa was pressurizing them for money. This is evident from the manner of Jankoji's instructions for smooth payment in a letter to Madho Singh. The Jaipur ruler was directed to handover the amount of money to Shinde's *vakil* Naro Kashi present in the Jaipur court who in turn would give the money to banker (*sahukar*) who would prepare hundis for Shindes and deliver to Shindes court.⁶ Similar directions followed from Jankoji to one Sadashiv Bhatt in the year 1759 as he badly wanted money for maintaining his troops.¹

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.162, Phalgun Sudi 1, 1812/1755

² Ibid.

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 169, Posh Sudi 11, 1815/1758

...सीयालु बाबती वायेदों मो (रूपैया) तीन लाख रूपैया आवणोछे सो वायेदों तो होये गयांछां... साहुकारो के पलव रूपैया आयो नहीं सो खरच वास्ते रूपैया सीताबसों ही चाहिये तो राज कांमदारों सों... रूपैया तीन लाख दीलावोला जी देर लगवावोमती श्री दावंजी आडसुल वा पोतदारां बापुजी कों रूपैया तीन लाख दीलवाये कर जेलदी ही आये पोंहोंचेंगे सो करोला

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 172, Posh Badi 10, 1815/1758; Sarkar, *Fallof the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, pp.135-136

...राजत्रफू सों तीन लाख रूपैया हाल को सीयालु को वायेदो बाबती रहाछे सो वास्ते असवार वा गुंमास्तां पोतदार बापो जी नायेक को भेजे हैं सो कों बहुत दी हुवें हैं सोकुं तीन लाख रूपैया सावकारां पास सों दीलवायेकर सीताब स्यों भेज देंनाजी देर करोलामती

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 172, Posh Badi 10, 1815/1758

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 171, Magh Sudi 10, 1815/1758

...हाल को करार को रूपैयां मों बाकी रहीछे सो रूपैया सबही श्री नारोकाशी उकील राज पास हमारे छें सोके मारफत सावकारों के पास दे सों हुंडी करीने सरकार मो भेज देवेंगे

Madho Singh it seems remained opposed to Shindes subordination evident from his acts of defiance when it came to meeting Maratha demands, despite Marathas dominating presence on the Jaipur borders. Payments of tribute as per Shindes demand weren't smooth, despite Jankoji putting pressure on the Jaipur ruler. Resistance to Maratha presence in outlying areas as tax collector despite sanctions from Jaipur ruler was also reported. Shinde's *thanedars* trying to plant themselves in Jaipur territory too were opposed by local Rajputs. *Thana* Chhain and neighbouring areas where Shinde's officials were trying to dominate went out of their hand as the local revenue collectors *amils* (*amaldars*) forced them out by resisting their presence. Jankoji asked Madho Singh to restore the Maratha *Thana* back to his men Raghoshankar and Bhagwant Raishankar or to face the visit of his forces that side.² Jankoji eyeing the strategically important Ranthambore Fort in 1758 reprimanded Madho Singh for unauthorized possession of the stronghold and to stop disturbances being created there by his men.³

As evident from these correspondences, Shindes had developed regular diplomatic ties with the Jaipur State and they were also trying to make their presence felt inside Jaipur state boundary by making claims for some pockets of Jaipur territory that they had been allotted earlier but now their claims were not recognized both by the local Rajputs and Madho Singh. As a result, their attempts

करार मों तफावतु न पडेगों सो ही करणा राज स्यों लायेकछे हरीं हमेंसां खत पत्र भेजते रहीयो

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 174, Chaitra Sudi 11, 1816/1759

...हाल को मामलैत बाबती उन्हालु को वायेदो को रूपैया छे लाख आवणें हेसो हंनोज हुंडीयां करवाये भेजें नहीं सो आछी न करीछे हाल बाचते ही पत्र छे लाख रूपैया श्री नारो कासी पंडत हमारे उहां हैं सोके पास दे... जो सो हुंडीयां कर हमारे पास भेजेंगे र्हां फौज स्यों खरच वास्ते जरूर ही चाहियें सो वास्ते सीताबही रूपैया दीलवाव जो दील करोला मती

² *Gwalior Kharita* No. 173, Phalgun Sudi 7, 1815/1758

...ठांनां छांयेंण वागैरां मो सरकार रो आमल छे सोमों सों हमारी ठांनोदारां स्यों उठाये राज को आमलदार बैठें हैं सोये बात आछीनकरीछे सरकार को आमल उठाये देना सो बीचार तुमस्यो... हाल बांचते ही पत्र श्री राघोसंकर वा श्री भगवंत राये संकर जे हीत्र हैं स्यों खुसी होयेकर राजी रहैं ठांनां बाबती आगों ही बंमोजी ब अंमल सरकार को चलो जाये कीसी बात स्यों खीचल न हो वे सोही ही करोला यां मो संतोख छे फेर नालसी नहीं आवेगी सो करीयो पंडीतां को राजीनामों राजरो त्रफूस्यों सुलाह हुवी को सीताबरस्यों भेज देना हरी भांत स्यों पंडीतां को गौर करीने सलुख के बाबेपत्र तीणा को आवे सो ही कर जो यां(म)ों आछें छे

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 166, Posh Badi 10, 1815/1758

to maintain *thanas* and collect revenue from areas they claimed as theirs, not much seems to have been achieved. Resistance from the local population as well as the Jaipur ruler was always exhibited in one form or the other.

However, in these years of Maratha presence in Rajasthan and North India, House of Shinde made their mark as Peshwas loyal sardars by putting up great examples of courage and valour. Massacre of Marathas especially Jayappa's men at Jaipur stirred Maratha forces to act aggressively against the Rajputs of Rajasthan. Jayappa's campaign against the Rathores in 1754-55 and his death as result of Rathores retaliation led to mobilization of Maratha forces in greater number in Rajasthan. Shindes became a dominant force thereafter in Rajasthan with rights to collect tribute and were also allotted certain crucial areas of strategic and economic importance. In the Battle of Panipat and campaigns prior to that too against the Afghan forces led by Ahmad Shah Abdali, House of Shinde again made great sacrifices as two of its family members Jankoji and Dattaji laid their life fighting against the enemies. Even Mahadji Shinde was severely injured losing one of his legs while he was returning from the Battle of Panipat by an Afghan soldier.

Mahadji Shinde's Relations with Jaipur State

The situation arising out of the Maratha defeat in the Battle of Panipat in 1761 put Shindes in dire need of money and they were forced to put pressure on the Jaipur ruler, asking them to pay tribute that had stopped in the last few years on account of Abdalis presence in the North. Kedarji Shinde and Mahadji Shinde asked Madho Singh to clear rupees 12 lakhs of tribute only a few months after their return from the Battle of Panipat.¹ Shindes asked Jaipur ruler to release money quickly and hand over to their representative Seth Dhaneshar and Parsuram.² The two Shinde sardars wrote, "There was no money even to meet their daily requirements."³

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 242, Jeth Badi 14, 1819/1762

...मामलैत बार लाख रुपैयां की राजत्रफू को बाकी मोके येवज मो तुरत देनो करो...

² Ibid.

...राज आपणो कामदारां कों ताकीदी करीने सबही रुपैया फौजां स्यों रोजमुरा वास्तें जलद ही आये पोंहोचेंगे सो करोला जी यांमो देर नहीं लागे सो ही करणा...

³ Ibid.

After the Battle of Panipat, during the 1760s, Kedarji Shinde and Mahadji Shinde both had dealings with the Jaipur ruler on behalf of the House of Shindes. Some *kharitas* were jointly addressed and others were individually addressed to the Jaipur ruler showing the dispute that Shinde family had over the question of leadership which was finally settled in favour of Mahadji Shinde.¹ This must have made Jaipur ruler not to take seriously the demands for tribute from Kedarji and Mahadji. Already Rajputs had reasserted themselves against Shindes presence at many places within Jaipur territory, after knowing about Maratha's defeat in the Battle of Panipat. In one such incident described in the correspondence by Shindes to Jaipur ruler, Shahpura (Seopur) chieftain troubled Maratha's *mamlatdars* Jayaji Bhoite and Pandit Raghoshankar and even it seems Shahpura chieftain had the backing of Madho Singh as Kedarji Shinde specifically asked Madho Singh not to send any troops.² Even Maratha *mamlatdar* Jayaji Bohite himself approached Madho Singh informing him about the trouble created by Shahpura chief. Shahpura chief it seems promised Jaipur ruler to get rid of Maratha *mamlatdars* from his area.³ Later it was Shinde's *vakil* at Jaipur court along with another Maratha representative who seems to have made it possible for Jayaji Bhoite to reclaim and settle again in his earlier lost position, in Shahpura area as Shindes *mamlatdar*.⁴

Overall, after the defeat in the Battle of Panipat, the period from 1761 to 1763 seems to have been very difficult time, for the House of Shindes, with widespread reassertion by local Rajputs, collection of tribute must have dried down. Both Kedarji and Mahadji wrote frequently to Madho Singh claiming their dues of money. It seems Jaipur paid some money around this time, *kharitas* refer to payment of one instalment which is reported and the rest of the amount was promised later.⁵ Unable to mobilize cash money Shindes even wanted Jaipur ruler to regularly pay daily expenses to their officials posted in the Jaipur State which they were probably not being paid after the Battle of Panipat.⁶ Facing acute

¹ Joint *Kharitas*: *Gwalior Kharita* No.178,185,187,188,191,194; Kedarji Shinde: *Gwalior Kharita* No.179,183,189,192; Mahadji Shinde: *Gwalior Kharita* No.184,186,190

² *Gwalior Kharita* No. 179, Chaitra Sudi 8, 1820/1763

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.180, Undated

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

shortage of ready cash at Ujjain, Kedarji Shinde asked Madho Singh for summer instalment payment to be made immediately.”¹

But around this time (1763) the tactics of the ruler of Jaipur and his administration to delay payments started hurting Mahadji Shinde. Shindes now onwards started putting pressure as his correspondences with Madho Singh reflected an offensive tone. During the rainy season of the year 1763 Shinde reprimanded Madho Singh for failing to pay the instalment of the tribute amount on time. The wording of the letter showed desperation for money running high as Shinde made Madho Singh known that it was hurting them, “Your dues for the *mamlat* are pending which you have failed to pay at a given time, this is not fair, as you get this letter, send all money.”²

However, it seems that, 1765 onwards things began to change with the house of Shindes, recovery from the shocks of the defeat in the Battle of Panipat was evident. Once again Shindes started looking up beyond their holdings in Malwa. They showed keenness for healthy relations with Jaipur State and their correspondences also echoed new vigour.³ Around this time, Kedarji Shinde was still giving company to Mahadji in the running of the day to day affairs.⁴ “Early in the month of March 1765, there was heavy concentration of the Maratha forces at Ujjain, Mahadji and Shakh Bai, mother of Jankoji Shinde, each had assembled ten to twelve thousand troops. Mahadji then proceeded to Kota and from there sent about ten thousand forces to realise the tribute from Mewar and Marwar.”⁵ It also appears that areas dominated by Shinde’s within the Jaipur territory before the Battle of Panipat were regained and were being resettled in 1766, Mahadji was involved in making fresh appointments too in place of the existing officials.⁶

The death of Malhar Holkar around this time was a blow to Marathas prospects in Rajasthan too and to bolster their presence in the region Kedar and

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.183, Jeth Sudi 1, 1820/1763

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.184, Bhadon Sudi 9, 1820/1763

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.185, Kunwar Badi 4, 1822/1765

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Gupta, K S, *Mewar and the Maratha Relations*, p.85

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.186, Jeth Sudi 5, 1823/1766

Mahadji Shinde made Madho Singh known that Malhar's grandson Malrao Holkar and Shindes were united.¹

Regular exchange of *kharitas* make it possible to track developing relations between Shindes and Jaipur ruler year by year as the period progresses. Shindes interactions with Jaipur state gained greater momentum as the period progressed, as exchange of *kharitas* were now taking place with shorter time interval compared to earlier period and information shared were much more in-depth and specific.

In the available *kharita* records, 1768 happens to be the last year when Kedarji Shinde is found involved in the affairs of the House of Shinde along with Mahadji. A year before Mahadji was in Poona and also succession issue of the Shinde Family was hotting up. Mahadji kept in touch with Madho Singh from Poona and dispatched Jaswant Rao Bable with a contingent of troops towards Jaipur state to collect arrears of dues.² Mahadji seemed to be now in control of Shinde's household as he wrote to Jaipur ruler, "Ask your officer to deposit the arrears with the above mentioned individual. I will also be reaching that side soon."³ Earlier Shindes contingent had suffered near total damage during the period 1759-61 while fighting Abdali's Afghan forces in the North. But now in 1767 it seems Shindes contingent raised afresh since 1761 was strong enough to patrol his sphere of influence in Malwa and bordering areas of Rajasthan, and apply pressure on defaulting tribute payers.⁴

The Jats around this time had been a trouble for both Marathas and the Jaipur ruler.⁵ Mahadji expressed solidarity with Rajputs against the Jats of Bharatpur. At the same time Shinde wanted Madho Singh's military support in their campaigns against the Jats.⁶

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.187, Sawan Badi 9, 1823/1766

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.190, Mah Badi 9, 1824/1767

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.190, Mah Badi 9, 1824/1767; Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.2, pp.511-512

...हमा के त्रफसू फौजसुधां राज श्री जसवंत राव वावले उधरी भेजे है सो पीछली वाकी का रूपया आवना है सो राज मुतसंदियासू ताकिदकर मसारनुले के पास ऐवज दिवाव जो हमा की सवारी भी उधरी सीताव आवसी

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.194 Kartik Sudi 12, 1825/1768

GK No.194, जाठ की ओर आपके फोज की लढाई हुई या बात सुने में आई सो तपसीलवार लेख विजा...

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.197, Chaitra Badi 7 1825/1768

Mahadji became the head of the Shinde family in 1768. His participation in the dispute for Udaipur throne on call from the local chief Ratan Singh clearly showed Shindes growing military power in the region.¹ Shinde was getting recognition from a Rajput chief outside Malwa, to solve their domestic problem. Mahadji's letter to Prithvi Singh confirms Ratan Singh's personal visit to Ujjain to seek his support against the Udaipur Maharana Arsi Singh in 1768.²

Mahadji strengthened militarily by the end of 1760s³ repeated demand for control over territories promised by Jaipur state earlier. He was in an advantageous position too as Prithvi Singh had just taken over as the new king of Jaipur state in 1768 after the death of Madho Singh. Villages in Borade area of Ajmer were asked to be vacated and handed over to Shinde's agent Pandit Govind Rao in the year 1769.⁴ Mahadji also appointed a new *vakil* Pandit Malhar Raghunath at Jaipur court in place of Balarao Govind to handle all affairs of Shindes.⁵

As Mahadji's personal position in his family stabilized, greater attention to Maratha affairs with regards to Jaipur and growing people to people contact across the Malwa-Rajasthan border comes to light through regular exchange of *kharitas* by Mahadji Shindes' Court. In one of the *kharitas* Mahadji asks Jaipur ruler to "provide escorts to Shinde's men travelling from Jaipur to Ujjain, they were to be escorted up to Bundi lying adjacent to Maratha base in Kota."⁶ By this time Kota was a safe base for the Marathas. Now Shinde even wanted protection for his own men living and holding property in the Jaipur city as is referred by Mahadji in his correspondences with the Jaipur ruler. Shinde asked Prithvi Singh to protect the house (*haveli*) of a person named Biraghman mortgaged by a local trader Seth

...म्हां केताक फौज बुलाबा वास्ते पहले राज हैं लीख्योछैसो अब ताई फौज आवैनछै सो सब ताकीद कराय भीजाबा मैं आवै...

¹ Gwalior Kharita No.198, Margarsar Sudi 4, 1825/1768

...आबे म्हे दरकुच ऊदेपुर जावांछा सो देखते कागज ठाकुरा राजसींघजी ने फौज सुधां सीताब मोकला... ढील करसी नहीं

² Gwalior Kharita No.198, Margarsar Sudi 4, 1825/1768

...म्हाराणा श्री रतनसींघजी अठे आया सो तो सारा समाचार आगें आपने लीखा ही छा सों पोहंचा ही होसी...

³ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.2, pp.510-512

⁴ Gwalior Kharita No.3, Posh Sudi 2, 1826/1769

⁵ Gwalior Kharita No.10, Phalgun Sudi 11, 1827/1770

⁶ Ibid.

Maujiram, since it was disputed and also asked for protection to the particular trader who had a shop in Jaipur.¹ It is also noticed in the year 1770 that in one of his correspondence with Prithvi Singh, Mahadji was now addressed as *Subedar Madhavraoji Shinde* reflecting his enhanced status in the Poona Court after he had become Shinde family chief.²

Mahadji Shinde now also sought cooperation from Prithvi Singh in other matters like recovery of money from traders who had defaulted and took refuge in the Jaipur territory.³ Mahadji wrote to Prithvi Singh about Modi Prem Raj's rupees 1600 taken by son of Gulabrai, a resident of Chaudhuriganj in Jaipur city. Since the latter had crossed over to Jaipur. Now that Modi Prem Raj's representative Sukhram was visiting Jaipur, Shinde wanted Jaipur administration to find the man and recover the money from him.⁴ Assistance in the recovery of money of his men were taken up by Shinde with Jaipur ruler on regular basis from now onwards, as later records also refer to many more cases of this nature.⁵

Around this time as the situation improved for Shinde with rise in his power, there are substantial number of correspondences regarding purchase of good quality horses and other animals like camels from animal markets in Rajasthan. Horses and other animals were purchased for Shindes household requirement as well as for Peshwa and other close associates of Shindes. Trader Gosain Jagrupgiri on behalf of Himmat Bahadur and Anupgiri was on one such trip to Rajasthan in 1771 to purchase horses and camels and Mahadji asked for his protection while he was travelling within the Jaipur territory.⁶ Mahadji again wrote to Prithvi Singh the very next year while he was camping at Khurja to assist Peshwa's official (*karkun*) who had gone from Poona to buy camels from various places in Rajasthan, mostly within Jaipur territory and also in the sphere of influence of the Jaipur ruler.⁷

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.12, Bhadon Badi 1, 1827/1770

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.14, Sawan, Sudi 10, 1827/1770

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.17, Kunwar /Ashwin , Badi 2, 1827/1770 also see *Gwalior Kharita* No.18, Kartik Badi 14, 1827/1770

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.131, Kartik Badi 10, 1828/1771

⁵ See *Kharita, Gwalior –Jaipur* (Published List), Rajasthan State Archive, Bikaner, 1977 for other similar cases

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.19, Margashir Badi 4, 1828/1771

⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No.23, Bhadon Badi 10, 1829/1772

As Shindes position got stronger and stabilized around this time, Mahadji's correspondences also reflected his superior status in the manner he prevailed upon his counterpart, Prithvi Singh. In 1772 when his men had gone to Jaipur for purchasing horses, he wanted Jaipur ruler to allow his men to buy good horses first.¹ As he wrote, "middleman Maujdin should be allowed to buy good horses first then you should buy."²

Other items needed by the Shinde household too began to be sent from Jaipur as in 1771 Mahadji wanted Prithvi Singh to ensure safe passage for clothes and goods which had been purchased at Jaipur as per the demand from Ujjain by the local Maratha representative of Shindes.³

There was much more transparency in diplomatic ties between Mahadji and Jaipur ruler with progress of time, now Shinde kept Jaipur informed about his important moves too, like his role in bringing back Emperor Shah Alam to the Delhi throne on Paush Sudi 2, 1828/1771 from his exile in the East.⁴ Again in 1774, when Shinde appointed his *vakil* at the Delhi court, he shared it with Prithvi Singh that a *vakil* had been sent at the court of the Mughal Emperor.⁵

No doubt events leading to the return of Shah Alam to Delhi throne from his exile in Allahabad also announced the arrival of Mahadji Shinde as the leading second generation Maratha leader in the North India's politics and completion of a decade of recovery and revival of Maratha power in the North after the Battle of Panipat. However, Mahadji withdrew from North India to take tackle the situation arising out of the death of Peshwa Narayan Rao and the Anglo-Maratha war further tied him down to Maratha affairs in the South in 1770s and towards the beginning of 1780s.

Events that immediately followed the first Anglo-Maratha War established Mahadji even with greater weight in North India's politics; the English were one more local powerful group whom Mahadji had made an ally during the course of the Anglo-Maratha war. Anglo-Maratha war tested Shinde's newly acquired military power too that he had been building after the Battle of Panipat.

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.25, Magh Sudi 14, 1829/1772

² Ibid.

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.21, Asahd Sudi 10, 1828/1771

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.22, Posh Sudi 11, 1828/1771

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.144, Baisakh Sudi 5, 1831 /1774

He was impressed with European style infantry and artillery and in 1784 hired the services of French mercenary to raise and add similar military forces to his own army.

All these developments tilted the balance of power in the North in favour of the Marathas with Mahadji Shinde as undisputed leader of the Maratha forces. Jaipur ruler and other powerful Rajput states in Rajasthan were to soon feel the pressure from the Marathas to pay the tribute that they had evaded from time to time.

However, like a true diplomat Mahadji Shinde kept Jaipur ruler informed of developments on Maratha side on regular basis. By this time Jaipur had a new ruler in Pratap Singh but Mahadji treated him in the same manner as his predecessor Prithvi Singh. Pratap Singh was kept informed with the details¹ of the battle fought with the English forces (coming from Bombay) and the victory in the Battle of Borghat (10 kos from Poona) after which English had to go away to Badgaon and they also returned the village taken under their control.² Despite such openness from the Shinde side Jaipur's reluctance to get involved in Marathas campaigns either in the North or South continued right from the beginning till the 1780s.

On the other hand Mahadji sought cooperation at various levels from Jaipur ruler in running the day to day affairs of Shinde household. Shinde's territory lay adjacent to Jaipur. In the 1770s beyond Malwa and Kota it was Jaipur territory where men from Maratha side seemed to be regularly crossing over with assistance of their leading sardars Shinde and Holkar for maintaining supply of horses and other items that they needed in their camps. Mahadji sought protection for Shri Munshi Mehta Sadashankar's family (*kabila*) travelling that side from Ujjain by escorting him with troops and men across Jaipur state boundary.³ Mahadji sought cooperation from Jaipur ruler in safe travel of merchants, sometimes as far as Delhi.⁴ Shinde asked an escort for Seth Gangaram going to Delhi, who probably was closely associated with Shinde's household finance.⁵ This fact is substantiated by a later reference in another *kharita* document, when Seth Gangaram's name

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 147, Magh Sudi 1, 1832/1775

² *Ibid.*

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 127, Ashad Badi 9, 1829/1772

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 142, Margashirs, Budi 12, 1830/1773

⁵ *Ibid.*

resurfaces in Mahadji's correspondences while Shinde reminds Jaipur chief about the tribute dues of 1773/1830 ¹ and asks him to now give that money to Seth Ganga Ram. ²

Merchants and traders had a major role to play in collection of tribute from hostile areas this has been seen in the case of Shindes dealings with Jaipur state. Shinde often deputed traders to collect money on their behalf from Jaipur officials as well as they acted as Shindes representatives/agents who verbally narrated as well as delivered the messages while on a visit to Jaipur court. That Seth Gangaram was handling job of this nature, is evident from more than one document sent from Shinde's court to the Jaipur ruler in 1775.³ This fact is re-established as seven years later too in a correspondence Mahadji refers to deputation of Seth Gangaram for the same job at the Jaipur Court. ⁴

There was growing interaction as shown above from Shinde's court with Jaipur authorities. But perception of Rajput ruler and the local zamindars in the *parganas* and villages towards Marathas were still probably the same as it was before the Battle of Panipat. Incidents of resistance to Maratha official's presence in cases mentioned here also proves continued resistance in the 1760s; things were not much different in the 1770s either. Mahadji reported to Prithvi Singh how Shinde's agents were being troubled many a times by local chief Kishan Singh Hada in alliance with Jaipur forces. Shinde showed his own exasperation as this was not expected and wanted Jaipur to support Shinde's local official Pandit Vithalrao Gopal by assisting with military forces in driving away Kishan Singh Hada.⁵

For Shindes, problems of tribute collection were equally nagging over the years and there was no improvement in the situation with the progress of time. Promises were made to be broken later and Shinde often wrote back in great anguish, payment of rupees 4 lakhs dues of Pandit Govindrao in 1773 was another

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No 114, Sawan Sudi 9, 1832/1775

² *Ibid.*

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No 146, Kartik Badi 13, 1832/1775; also see *Gwalior Kharita* No 145, Magh Sudi 9, 1832/1775

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.78, Bhadon Badi 13, 1839/1782

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.143, Chaitra Sudi 14, 1831/1774

such an incidence when Mahadji dispatched his men Jodhraj and Amarchand Devadas to collect the money as promised.¹

Territorial disputes also figure regularly in the *kharitas* sent by Shinde to Jaipur rulers. There were several flash points in their ties with the Jaipur ruler especially when it came to rights over particular areas for revenue collection which were promised to Marathas soon after the succession dispute between Ishwari Singh and Madho Singh but later on were overlooked by successive rulers. Contest over those pockets of land persisted all these years as local Rajputs raised their heads whenever they found an opportunity against the Maratha attempt to annex those territories.

Shinde even intervened in the dispute over Tonk and Rampura parganas where House of Holkar claimed their rights to collect revenue but faced resistance from local Rajput chief of Chandrawat clan between July-August 1779 and January-February 1781. Mahadji Shinde had to apply pressure on the Jaipur ruler to get the control over these areas to Holkars. In fact matters came to a point where veiled threats were issued to ruler of Jaipur. Correspondence from Mahadji to Pratap Singh, “declared occupation of Tonk and Rampura as unlawful and asked them to transfer the revenue collection rights over the areas for healthy relations or there might be trouble in relationship.”² Mahadji Shinde further asked Pratap Singh to remove forces or he would also send his forces to settle the issue.³

Mahadji Shinde also reprimanded Jaipur ruler for build up of his forces at a place called *Samedhi ka Thana*.⁴ After a year Shinde ordered his forces to march towards *Samedhi ka Thana*⁵ as all diplomatic means were not effective in resolving the dispute over the contested territories including Tonk and Rampura mentioned earlier. Again the very next month Jaipur ruler was asked to handover pargana Tonk and Rampura to Holkar’s *kamavisdar* Govind Holkar by Mahadji.⁶ At another spot within Jaipur, “the two villages, Mauje Chakwara and Dhimana given to Pandit Balarao Govind in lieu of his salary were seized by local Rajput

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 141, Jeth Badi 6, 1830/1773

² *Gwalior Kharita* No. 75, Sawan Sudi 4, 1836/1779

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 76, Sawan Sudi 10, 1836/1779

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 150, Sawan Sudi 11, 1836/1779

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 148, Sawan Sudi 11, 1837/1780

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 149, Kunwar (Ashwin) Sudi 7, 1837/1780

officials though they had been Maratha possession for a long period in the past.”¹ Mahadji issued warning to Pratap Singh, “Both villages should be vacated and handed over to Pandit Shankaraji Jagannath on behalf of Balarao, as he is there and in future you should take care that such problems don’t occur in those villages.”² Jaswantrao Bable was sent with a contingent by Mahadji to settle revenue rights and to take over the command of pargana Tonk and Rampura in 1781.³ Another area where Shinde had dispute with Jaipur were villages falling under *Taluka* Borade, part of Ajmer *Suba* but falling in Jaipur territory. Mahadji gave *mamlat* of Ajmer suba to his man Mirja Rahim Beg in 1781 and asked Pratap Singh to give the *peshkash* amount of *Taluka* Borade to Rahim Beg.⁴

Continued defiance and resistance at local level towards the Marathas forced Mahadji to again take up the issue with the Jaipur ruler. In 1782, *kharita* sent across to the Jaipur ruler shows Shinde chief referring to Pratap Singh about loss of goods and arms of one of their men travelling within Jaipur territory. Onkar Shinde passing through Jaipur territory was robbed of his belongings by a local Rajput Thakur Thakt Singh of Jamrauli.⁵

However, even these incidents of resistance didn’t hamper Marathas resolve to dominate over the locally powerful groups and probably Mahadji was more bothered about the bigger cause of establishing Maratha supremacy over a larger area than the confines of the Jaipur state. That is why Mahadji sought military cooperation from Pratap Singh in 1783 against Muhammad Beg Hamadani who had ditched Mirza Safi Khan in the Delhi court.⁶ Shinde dispatched Ambaji Ingle with troops and a platoon⁷ on request from Afrasiab Khan and the Gosavis⁸ and also wanted Jaipur to cooperate by sending forces. His own forces were then investing Gohad Jats led by Rana Chattar Singh.

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.80, Kartik Sudi 14, 1837/1780

² Ibid.

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.81, Ashad Badi 14, 1838/1781

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.77, Mah Badi 1, 1838/1781

⁵ Two Shields (*dhals*), one *silhat* gun.....and one knife belonging to Onkar Shinde were later recovered by Shindes men in Jaipur. Other items had been taken by Thakur Thakt Singh, the local Rajput chief whom Shinde’s men had been able to identify later. *Gwalior Kharita* No.79, Sawan Badi 14, 1839/1782

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.83, Asoj(Ashwin) Sudi 1, 1840/1783

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.142

As the Anglo Maratha war drew to a close, Mahadji's position in the North was strengthened because of his new found status as the first rank Maratha *sardar* next only to Nana Fadnis and growing proximity to the English after the Treaty of Salbai. Around this time (1783) Shindes domination over Jaipur grew. Shinde intervened in the local matters relating to Jaipur and Kota. Shinde asked Jaipur ruler to withdraw support to Shahpura ruler Raja Kishore Das whom Jaipur had decided to support in the dispute over Karhaial territory, with the Kota chief.¹ Later on Mahadji asked Pratap Singh to settle the dispute & ongoing conflict that Kota and Shahpura rulers were having.² Mahadji Shinde's growing power were visible in the messages to the Jaipur ruler to control the local elites in the Jaipur region.

All important events like news of victory over Gwalior Fort ³ as well as about siege, evacuataion and capture of Gohad Fort ⁴ were conveyed to the Jaipur ruler.

Shinde also asked for support in nabbing thieves wanted in the Shinde court. ⁵ Mahadji also wrote to Pratap Singh ⁶ about a case of fraud in which one person named Lal Mohammad Khan got false seal of Mr. Anderson, British agent, in Shinde's court, on a paper and took 1000 rupees from the house of Shaukar Kashmirimal. Sahukar sought Shinde's help as the culprit crossed over to the Jaipur territory. Shinde wrote for assistance to Jaipur ruler in getting the man back to his own camp.⁷

Can we say that Mahadji was asserting his heightened power in 1783 and trying to gain maximum from Jaipur ruler. In the process Shinde was showing concern for his own men doing business in Jaipur. He asked Pratap Singh to facilitate the business of traders Jiwandas Govardhan & Uttamcand whose shops were in Jaipur.⁸ Another person Shivdas Nagar who had gone from the Shindes

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.84, Ashad Sudi 9, 1840/1783

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.89, Aasoji Badi 3, 1840/1783

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.85, Bhadon Badi 10, 1840/1783

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.88, Chaitra Badi 13, 1840/1783

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.86, Phalgun Badi 14, 1840/1783

⁶ Sardesai, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.142

⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No.87, Ashad Sudi 3, 1840/1783

⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No.90, Phalgun, Badi 10, 1840/1783

camp to buy camels from Marwar was to be escorted up to the Jaipur boundary on his way back from Marwar.¹

Mahadji Shinde wrote to Pratap Singh in 1783 from Gwalior about Pandit Shankar Rao Jagannath who had been there as Shinde's man for all official work, he died and his son Trimbak Shankar was now appointed to perform the same task. Shinde asked for villages and daily expenses assigned to his father to be transferred to him.²

Mahadji Shinde sought protection from the Jaipur ruler for his bankers and traders conducting their business in Jaipur city as he had become powerful by this time. Ballabh Das Sahukar with his family (*kabila*) and men had gone to Jaipur from Laskar. Shinde asked for escort to be provided to his entourage on way back from Jaipur to Kota.³ Also since the trader was dealing with local men from Jaipur, Shinde wrote, "the banker's (*Sahukar*) business is with men from Jaipur, so help him in that."⁴ Clearly Mahadji was promoting the interest of his bankers in Rajasthan. Mahadji Shinde even asked Jaipur ruler Pratap Singh that British agent (in Shinde's court) Anderson's church cleric be escorted and shown the market and garden in the Jaipur city.⁵ This reflected Mahadji's growing friendship with the English agent Anderson.

Thus during the year 1783 Jaipur received letters that showed superior position held by Mahadji Shinde after he had signed the Treaty of Salbai, also Shinde was seeking co-operation from Jaipur ruler on such matters that reflected expansion of his sphere of influence. How else can one explain maximum number of *kharitas* received from Shindes court in the year 1783 by the Jaipur ruler, just after the Anglo-Maratha War?

Mahadji also renewed the demand for handing over the control over Tonk and Rampura to Ahilyabai Holkar in the very beginning of 1784 and for the payment of the dues of these *mamlats* to Holkars.⁶ Local Rajput officials had been resisting Holkar officials' attempt to establish control over Rampura so far. But

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.91, Bhadon Sudi 6, 1840/1783, Shivdas Nagar was asked to purchase five camels and a cow from the fair grounds in Marwar

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.92, Bhadon Badi 9, 1840/1783

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.95, Chaitra Badi 3, 1840/1783

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.98, Phalgun Badi 9, 1840/1783

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.116, Chaitra Sudi 3, 1841/1784

now in 1784, Holkar family seemed to have some control over Tonk.¹ In the past many times Holkar sardars had already written about it to Jaipur ruler. But Mahadji intervention in this matter seemed to have strengthened Holkar's position.²

Still, Maratha men were not safe in Jaipur city where they were venturing to do some business. Mahadji wrote to Pratap Singh in 1784³ "Balarao has house in Jaipur. There people from your state have encroached and commit excesses of all kind. Control your men so that no one commits atrocity in Balarao's house."⁴

In another letter of the same year he wrote to Pratap Singh Takhtmal Sahukar's *gumasta* Uttamchand's family (*kabila*) and officials are in Jaipur. They are not paying Takhtmal the dues of the shop and misbehave so warn Uttamchand, ask him to pay the due amount.⁵

However, one of the most disputed claims was for lucrative salt trade in Sambhar Lake territory where Shindes seem to have been interested for long to wrest full control from the local Rajput authorities. Documents show that Shindes were trying to take over the local salt trade and the neighbouring villages. Sambhar Lake was traditionally divided in 50:50 ratio between Jaipur and Jodhpur states.

Matters came to an alarming situation as Mahadji once again tried to settle it with Jaipur ruler Pratap Singh in 1784.⁶ Shindes message sent in 1784 read, "Your State had given us Sambhar but till today Sambhar's *amil* hasn't vacated the local *thana* and trouble our men posted there; about this earlier also I have written to your office, but your office hasn't taken any action so now ask the *amil* of Sambhar to handover the place to our men and our men will coordinate with your court and settle the place accordingly." was the message sent in 1784.⁷

Mahadji also later asked Pratap Singh to stop the excesses committed by his officials at Sambhar.⁸ *Rahdari* tax collectors from Jaipur side had stopped payments from tax collection on *Ijara* land held by the traders of Sambhar. And officials (*Dakhledar*) from Jaipur side present in Sambhar were asking for more

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 96, Magh Badi 14, 1841/1784

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.97, Ashad Sudi 1, 1841/1784

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.99, Fagun Badi 11, 1841/1784

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No.103, Jeth Badi 13, 1842/1785

money from traders than they were authorized. According to contract they were to collect 20 rupees per day but instead they were collecting 2,500 rupees every month. Mahadji wrote to the Jaipur ruler to settle the *Rahdari* of Sambhar so as to make it possible to his men to collect their share of money from Sambhar, and also to remove his armed men (*shilepos*) from the area.¹

Mahadji's men² in Sambhar were at the receiving end, due to the local *amil* Daulatram, who was creating problem while demanding *Rahdari* and was troubling the merchants by demanding more price than what was prevalent in Jaipur leading to loss in income. He was creating problems in other works too. Mahadji asked Pratap Singh to recall Daulatram and appoint another person as revenue collector of Sambhar.³

Before the Lalsot Campaign Mahadji again conveyed to Pratap Singh⁴ his unhappiness over the discrimination being committed with the Maratha officials in Sambhar. "In Sambhar the spies (*Khufianavis*) have troubled our official, *Amaldar*, traders and cultivators. Earlier also I wrote to you about this, you have not acted, now call your spies from Sambhar."⁵

Seeing Sambhar affairs in disarray Mahadji made fresh appointments in 1786. Message to Pratap Singh⁶ conveyed was, "we are sending Seth Gangaram and Rajaram from here for taking over the work of *amil* and *faujdar* of Sambhar, so do consult them for all official work."⁷ Wary of local *amil's* interference, Shinde no more wanted Jaipur's officials to preside over Sambhar's salt trade.

Before Lalsot Campaign which Mahadji undertook to punish Jaipur for failure to pay the tribute reminders for the payment of the dues were dispatched and sufficient warnings were also given as Mahadji wrote to Pratap Singh, "inform Khwas Rodaram about money payment and send him soon. In this only our mutual relation will grow."⁸

¹ Ibid.

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.118, Baishakh Badi 1, 1843/1786

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.104, Sawan Sudi 6, 1843/1786

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.119, Mah Sudi 5, 1843/1786

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No.113, Bhadon Badi 2, 1842/1785

In fact Marathas led their military forces into Jaipur territory after providing sufficient warnings; even in 1786 relations hadn't deteriorated that far. As usual Mahadji wrote to Pratap Singh "You have sent horses that we came to know... send other horses from Samand (probably Samarkand) only."¹

Though battle of Tunga in July-August 1787 was a setback for the Marathas, it was a military exercise which also tested Mahadji's organizational skills afresh after the First Anglo-Maratha. Having tested the strength of his new army raised by De Boigne and faced with the rebellion of his Mughalia/ Hindustani troops led by Ismail Beg, Mahadji's timely retreat saved his forces from great losses.²

Mahadji reorganized his forces while staying at Mathura during the period 1789-90 before his final assault on the Rajputs of Jaipur and Jodhpur. He asked De Boigne to prepare two more Brigades. Big and small guns were manufactured at Gwalior and De Boigne's infantry & artillery were equipped with them. On 19th June 1790 De Boigne's newly formed army marched to Jaipur against the Rajput forces. The Jaipur force was defeated at Patan in June 1790 and that of Jodhpur at Merta in September 1790.³

In 1791 again the local Rajput zamindars (*Bhaums*) were disturbing traders and collecting *rahdari* according to their will as Mahadji wrote to Pratap Singh, "Traders coming to load salt from Sambhar are being asked for *rahdari* by the Rajputs and so they have stopped coming. So control the *bhaums* of the area in the interest of both the sides."⁴ The local *amil* even resisted Maratha official's attempts to repair the boundaries of the Lake to improve the production of salt which would benefit both the sides.⁵

Again in 1792, Mahadji wrote about another keenly contested territory, "Borade *thana* hasn't been vacated so far, so now hand over the *thana* to Jaguji (Probably Jivaji Ballal) and Lakshman Rao. Otherwise I will ask them to capture

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.105, Jeth Badi 5, 1843/1786

² See Sarkar, Sindhia as Regent of Delhi, 1787 & 1789-91 for details, pp.1-15

³ See the extensive and graphic details in Jadunath Sarkar, Sindhia as Regent of Delhi, 1787 & 1789-91 of both the Battles of Patan and Merta

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.34, Ashad Sudi 5, 1848/1791

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.42, Paush Sudi 5(?), 1848/1791

the *Thana*.”¹ This area was as earlier mentioned a part of the Ajmer territory falling under Jaipur’s control.

After spending about a year in various parts of Rajasthan collecting tributes as his troops were in great arrears Mahadji Shinde made plans to visit Poona. He left behind a command structure. Shinde appointed Gopal Rao Bhau as his *Mukhtar* and *Naib* or deputy and asked De Boigne and other generals to obey Gopal Rao like Mahadji Shinde himself in September 1791, this was his last act of significance.²

In 1792 as Mahadji marched to Poona via Ujjain he was taking this journey at the height of his power in Rajasthan and North having conquered all that mattered to him. His armed forces were strongest in Rajasthan-Delhi-Agra region. But what had bothered him since arrival of Peshwa men Tukoji Holkar and Ali Bahadur who were demanding their own share in Mahadji’s conquests in the North but he couldn’t fulfill their high demands. And Mahadji wanted to settle this dispute once for all with the Peshwa and so he was heading to Poona.

Before leaving for Poona in fact it seems Mahadji was collecting some really exotic gifts for the Peshwa and other esteemed members he was going to meet as well as to show off his superior position. He asked Pratap Singh³ for four horses of Turkish variety for Peshwa at Poona which traders had brought from abroad and also assured to pay the amount. He also sent two of his own men Pandit Ganpatraoji and Parbatrao Shinde to select horses from Jaipur. Mahadji acknowledged the receipt of 4 horses⁴ sent along with Parbat Rao Shinde when they reached his camp in the month of Posh. He again asked Pratap Singh to buy and send 10 Turkish Horses of good health, sturdy, intelligent (swift, trained) type by the end of the year 1791.⁵ On way to Poona also Mahadji wrote to Pratap Singh⁶ to buy and send 4 horses of given specification while he was staying at Ujjain.⁷

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.47, Ashad Sudi 1, 1849/1792

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar J N(trans &ed), pp.51,55

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.28, Chaitra Sudi 6, 1848/1791

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.50, Paush Sudi 8, 1848/1791

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.51, Paush Sudi 13, 1848/1791

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.54, Mah Sudi 1, 1848/1791

⁷ *Gwalior Kharita* No.54, Mah Sudi 1, 1848/1791

Mahadji also took steps to restore normalcy in the areas that came under Maratha control after attaining dominant position. He wrote to Pratap Singh,¹ “Shri Pushkar fair has been organized in *Kartik* month every year and this year too. Ask all traders to attend the fair and inform them about it.”²

Mahadji didn't loose contact with Pratap Singh while staying at Poona³ and acknowledged messages written by Bohra Khushaliram⁴ Even he continued to ask for favour for traders associated with him as he was doing earlier. As he wrote in 1793 to Pratap Singh, “Mukunddas Ambadas Sahukar has come to Jaipur from Ujjain for his marriage function, so whatever help the *Sahukar* asks for, please provide the same to him.”⁵ Only hereafter in 1793 he wrote to the Jaipur ruler “to take all work of his side from Ganesh Jiwaji”.⁶ He was referring to Jivaji Rao Ballal or Jiva Dada as a later *Kharita* after his death too mentions Bakshi Rao Jivaji Ballal conveying the message to Pratap Singh that he received letter from Alijah Bahadur (Daulat Rao Shinde) from Pune, about his appointment as the *Karbhari* of Hindustan.⁷

Probably in the last correspondence in this series of Mahadji from Poona with Pratap Singh, as the first mention of his illness comes on June 5, 1793⁸ was again for the payments to be made, “pay to Ganpat Rao the amount that is accounted for the month of Jeth and pay accordingly in future as agreed.” It also mentioned “Bhikaji Pandit is going there so engage him in works as needed.”⁹

But his death in February, 1794 along with the deaths of Ahilyabai, Tukoji Holkar, and Nana Farnavis thereafter, in quick succession led to the weakening of Maratha power in the region.

Successors of both Shinde and Holkar found it difficult to handle the chaotic scene prevailing in the region. Daulat Rao Shinde and Jaswant Rao Holkar had tough time in managing infighting with their ranks of officials in the army as

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.43, Aasoj Sudi 5, 1848/1791

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.43, Aasoj Sudi 5, 1848/1791

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.44, Mah, Sudi 1(?), 1849/1792

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No.56, Magh Sudi 3, 1850/1793

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.57, Baisakh Sudi 1, 1850/1793

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No.55, Baisakh Sudi 15, 1850/1793

⁷ *Holkar Kharita* No.287, Ashwin Sudi 1, 1851/1794

⁸ Sardesai, G S, *NHM*, Vol.3, p.261

⁹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.58, Asadh Badi 13, 1850/1793

well as among the family members. There was a showdown between Shinde and Holkar forces too at Lakheri in 1793 causing more worries for the House of Holkars. Shinde however continued to dominate for some more time though infighting among the family members was growing, their power shrank as army ranks began to wither away too as problems of payment of the salary continued and there were better opportunities elsewhere.

Maratha Dominance over Jaipur and Jodhpur

Maratha power in the frontier region was limited. Their claims for tribute and other types of monetary exactions from the local elites were expressed in a dominating language as evident from their correspondences. So were the claims over and limited control over certain territories - agriculturally and commercially rich or strategically placed. How Maratha sardars Shinde and Holkar expressed their superior and dominant position in their day to day dealing with the Jaipur ruler comes out very clearly in the selective *kharitas* that Jaipur ruler received from Shinde and Holkar.

Varying Degree of Verbal Threats by the Marathas to Jaipur Rulers

The *kharitas* of Shinde and Holkar families sent to the Jaipur rulers contain veiled and open threats by the members of the two families while putting pressure for tribute payment over a period of time. Veiled and open threats were also issued against the disturbances and encroachments being reported by the Maratha officials present in certain pockets of Jaipur territory for revenue collection. However, Jaipur rulers made light of the Marathas demands as well as veiled and open threats of sending armed forces to collect tribute and pending dues or warnings to stop encroachments in areas where Maratha *thanas* and officials were stationed.

As already mentioned Shinde and Holkar's demand for payment of tribute (*Khandani*) feature consistently in their *kharitas* sent to Jaipur ruler right from the 1750s. They are fine examples of how Shinde and Holkar, the two Maratha sardars were trying to dictate terms with Jaipur ruler on the basis of their superior military position. Present study of around 500 *kharitas* sent by Shinde and Holkar between 1750-1800 shows that Marathas were constantly pressurising Jaipur ruler to make more and more monetary payments to meet their financial needs.

Resistance and opposition to Maratha presence from several places within the Jaipur territory comes to light as records mention names of places where disturbances and encroachments by local Rajputs occur while Marathas attempted to undermine local authorities in collection of taxes. Maratha official's presence and authority was resisted by local officials and zamindars. Disturbances were reported by Shinde and Holkar officials at many places like Rampura, Tonk, Toda, Malpura, Shahpura, Sambhar, Borade villages nearby Sambhar, Ranthambore Fort and several other territories within Jaipur state boundaries.

As it is evident from details in these correspondences first there was a polite request to send as per the agreements made in the past. Later when the dues were not realized on time, there followed a stern warning or veiled threat. When even that failed to awaken the Jaipur authorities, then it was followed by open threat in many cases. In a letter written by Khanderao Holkar son of Malhar Rao Holkar to Madho Singh soon after Malhar Rao appointed his officials in the court of Jaipur ruler to collect money, a reminder for payment was made.¹ Seeing no response the very next year a warning letter to Madho Singh read as follows, "...your State had agreed to pay *khandani* dues, in this context Kanhiram and Shri Hargobind have also informed you, now ask your officials to send *hundi* for money."² In 1753 matters became worse, Malhar Rao wrote to Madho Singh, "Ganesh Pandit and Shankaraji Pandit have written about non-collection of money which is not good...." further he wrote, ".... to maintain good relations arrange for the money."³

Even delay in installment payment was not tolerated, Raghunath Rao in 1757 wrote to Madho Singh, "...*kistabandi* i.e. installment payment for the month of *Kartik* has failed, this is not correct, send money quickly... that will be better for

¹ *Indore Kharita*, No.4, Asoj Budi 13, 1807/1750

... खांडेराव होलकर... श्री सुभेदार को कागज आने आयो तीमें लख्यो आयो जो लोकासमजास का पैसा की तदबीर सीताब की जाँ... जों पैसा को तदबीर सीताब कीया च्याही जें ताकीद जादा छे

² *Indore Kharita* No.20, Bhādon, Sudi 1, 1808/1751

...तुमारे सरकार में हमारा खांनगी ऐवज देणा करार कीयाछे इस सबव आगे श्री कन्हिराम हुजूर आये थे तब श्री हरगोवींदजी के हाथ की चीटीछे ती माफक कबूल होकर आप के पास आया होसी अब खरच की नीकड छे सो अपने मुत्सदी कुं ताकीद कर पैसों की हुंडी कर भेज दीजो

³ *Indore Kharita* No.37, Kartik Sudi 1, 1809/1752

you.”¹ Most of these remarks also were due to acute scarcity of money to fuel Maratha campaigns especially in the 1750s and just after the Battle of Panipat. Later in the 1790s Maratha sardars stuck in alien surroundings without money also sent similar verbal threats. A *kharita* from Rao Lakshman Rao Anant Bahadur and Shri Rao Jagnnath Ram Bahadur writing to Pratap Singh, the Jaipur ruler, reminded him of dues of rupees 63 lakhs to the Peshwa.... further the letter read, “don’t delay in this matter otherwise we will send our force and there will be destruction as we have already written to you.”²

Jaipur ruler however paid tribute only when Maratha sardars dispatched their military contingents and matters came to armed conflict.

Similarly *kharitas* from Shindes court right from 1752 have appeals in them for the payment of the money due from the Jaipur ruler to their representatives. These appeals were made almost every year as the *kharita* sent by Kedarji Shinde to Madho Singh in 1753 read³, “Dhanaji Jadav has been appointed to look after the revenue collection and payment are to be made to him when he visits your territory. In the year 1755 when the Maratha forces under Jayappa were investing Jodhpur, *kharita* sent by Jayappa Shinde to Madho Singh asked the latter to facilitate in exchange of their *Hundi* carried by a trader named Bhikaridas and the exchanged money to be given to Thakur Dalel Singh and the latter to be escorted up to Merta with 500 cavalry men.”⁴

...गणेश पंडित तथा शंकराजी पंडित के लीखासुं मालम हुवो जो रुपया वसुला में आया नहीं या बात जोग्य नहीं इहा हजुर कीताकीद रुपया के सबब हुई है सो बेवरो अनुपरामजी के लीखासुं मालम होगो अब इहा की सलुक राखणो जरूर है तो रुपया की निसां पंडिता की कर रसीद पंडिता की इहा पोहचाव

¹ *Indore Kharita* No.72, Kartik Sudi 10, 1814/1757

...आपके तरफ का रुपैया कातिक महीने के किस्ति का सीरकार में अब ताई आया नहि कीस्तबंदी का करार था सो चुग गया या बात (अ)सनेह को जोग्य नहि रुपैया की ताकिद मुसदीयां कों काराय जलदी से रुपैया भेज देना यामें आछाहें

² *Indore Kharita* No.99, Agahan Badi 8 ...Samvat year is not clearly mentioned

...रुपैया त्रेसठिलाख 63,00,000/- बाकी के दैनै की लिखत राज के मुखत्यार... लिख दिडी छै सो अवताई फडचौ हुवौन्ही... अर इस बात में ढील होइगी तौ फोज सरकार की आवैगी ठौ उजाड़ विगार होइगा इस वास्तै पहिलै ही राज नै लिखीछै

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No.152, Chaitra Sudi 3, 1810/1753

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 161, Pratham Jeth Sudi 5, 1812/1755

...ह्मा को रुपैया क्यां हुंडया... सावुकार श्री भीखारीदास वा मौजीराम ईनक्यां चीठयां जयेपुर मों क्यांछें सो हुंडी पत्रां ठाकरां दलेलसींघजी राजावत... सो सब रुपैया हुंडयां

In the two *kharitas* sent in the year 1758¹ by Jankoji Shinde to Madho Singh the Shinde Chief asked for 3 lakhs of rupees that was due up to winter season and were to be sent quickly to their representative Potedar Bapuji Naik who had gone to Jaipur Court with a contingent of cavalry. In the year 1759, there was an enquiry about delay in payment of rupees 6 lakhs due up to the summer season and same now was to be given to Pandit Shankarji Naro Kashi.²

During the Battle of Panipat the ties between the Jaipur ruler and the Marathas were snapped as the former was not a party to the combined Maratha army facing the Afghans. For a few seasons after the shocking defeat, House of Shinde had no interaction with the Jaipur court and it seems that all ties remained snapped. Only in 1762³ Kedar Rao Shinde and Mahadji Shinde wrote to Madho Singh about payment of rupees 45 lakhs and the details of the remaining dues. The very next year too there is a mention of the pending summer installment of the dues by Kedarji to be sent through a *hundi* from the Jaipur State. Two months later⁴ Mahadji Shinde again wrote about clearing all remaining dues and asked them to send the amount soon after getting the letter. In 1766 again a *kharita* was sent in which it seems the delay in backlog payment forced Mahadji Shindes to send a force under Yaswant Rao Bable, their local *kamavisdar* posted in the vicinity of Kota.⁵ In an undated *kharita* sent by Mahadji to Madho Singh while he was camping at Ujjain he reminded the Jaipur ruler about failure to pay summer

ह्या पास खरच वास्ते आयां चाहीयें सो आप आपणें त्रफू को मातबर मुसदीयां के साथें सवार (500) पांच सो देकर मेडता लग रूपैया आसे पोहोचें सो ही करसी

¹ Gwalior Kharita No.172 Posh Badi 10 1815/1758 & Gwalior Kharita No.169, Posh Sudi 11, 1815/1758

² Gwalior Kharita No.175 Sawan Sudi 12, 1816/1759

³ Gwalior Kharita No.26/177 Kartik Badi 13, 1819

⁴ Gwalior Kharita No.184 Bhadrapad Badi 9, 1820/1763

...हाल को मामलत बाबत बाकी रही छे सो को वायदे तो चुकी गयांछांहनोज रूपीया भेजोन्हीं है सो आंछी बात करीन्ही हाल बांचते पत्र ही... रूपैया सबही ह्यापास भेज देना राज रो कामदारां स्यों ताकीदी करीने सताबही रूपैया भेज देवोला जी देर करीयोमती...

⁵ Gwalior Kharita No.190 Magh Badi 6, 1824/1767

instalment and to pay now without any delay or threatened to send troops (*tankha aswar*)¹

Again in 1770² Peshwa Madhavrao Ballal called for quick delivery of the amount of rupees one lakh nine thousand and warning them of consequences in case of delays.³ But the person Apaji Narayan sent to collect this amount was taken hostage and this is evident from *kharita* sent in the month of *Kartik*⁴ by Mahadji.

This was obviously a flash point, an outrageous act without a precedent. It underlined the tension in relations between Shinde and Jaipur ruler after the Battle of Panipat over demands for money. However, both sides seem to have maintained the normal diplomatic ties and things didn't flare up further. As we find correspondences on several other matters continued even after such a hostile act from Jaipur side towards Shinde. Next year Mahadji Shinde⁵ requested escort for a trader from Ujjain who had gone to purchase clothes. At the same time Shinde also protested⁶ the acquisition of Bhusan and Buthawalba villages in Narnaul *pargana*

...ह्मा के त्रफसु फौजसुधां राज श्री जसवंतराव वावलें उधरी भेजे है सो पीछली बाकी का रूपया आवना है सो राज मुतसदियासू ताकिद कर मसारनुले के पास एवज दिवाव जो ह्मा की सवारी भी उधरी सीताव आवसी

¹ Undated *Kharita*: Mahadji to Madho Singh Gwalior *Kharita* No. 181

...हाल साल ह्मां को मारफात दीवांन कन्हीरामजीने मामलैत चुकायां... बाकी को रूपीया उन्हालु पर देना सो... चुकी गयोछे हाल छांवनी उजेंणमों हुवीछे लोकां वास्ते रोजमुरा को रूपीया देना चाहीये सो सबही रूपीया... राज को कामदारां स्यों ताकीदी करीने हुंडीयां करवार्येंके भेजदेवेंगे... देर करना मती हुंडीयां... कामदार ढील करेंगे तो तनखा असवार आवेंगे मुसदीयां स्यों रोजीनो की तसदी होसी

² Gwalior *Kharita* No.11, Jeth Sudi 13, 1827/1770

...साल गुजस्ते सीरकार की खंडणी संस्थान जयपूर की... कीस्तबंदी करदेकै कीस्ती का ऐवज ऐक लक्षनव हजार रूपीये... वाके उसूल को राज श्री आपाजी नारायण को रखेछे वाकी वोहोत दीन भये आवेलों उसूल दीया नाही... सो ऐवात आछी छेनाही... रूपीयान को उसुल आपाजी नारायण को दीजो ढील न कीजो

³ Gwalior *Kharita* No 139, Jeth, Sudi 4, 1827/1770

⁴ Gwalior *Kharita* No 11, Kartik Sudi 4, 1827/1770

...सीरकार की खंडणी संस्थान जयपूर की...कीस्तबंदी कर देकै कीस्ती का ऐवज ऐक लक्ष नव हजार रूपीये... वा के उसूल को राज श्री आपाजी नारायण को रखेछे वा को वीहोत दीन भये आवेलों उसूल दीया नाही वैसो हजूर जाहीर भयो सो ऐवात आछी छे नाही... येकलाख नव हजार में जो वाकी रही होगी सो रूपीयान को उसुल आपा जी नारायण को दीजो ढील न की जो

⁵ Gwalior *Kharita* No 211, Ashad Sudi 10, 1828/1771

⁶ Gwalior *Kharita* No 138, Sawan, Badi 7, 1828/1771

by Jaipur ruler belonging to Muhammad Khan's *jagir* since earlier period and warned against this act which could damage their relations.

Again in the year 1771 Mahadji asked for the payment of dues without any delay and also referred to taking hostage of Dhondo Govind last year when he had gone to collect money.¹

In the year 1773 again the dues of the local Maratha official Pandit Govind Rao² were demanded by Mahadji, two Maratha officials Jodhraj and Amarchand Devadas were sent to collect the payment. In fact in the year 1775 the Shinde chief reminds the Jaipur ruler to pay the dues of the year (1830) 1773³ to Seth Gangaram. It seems the money transaction quite often involved the bankers and financiers from both sides who were involved in actual delivery of the cash to the concerned party. After a long interval in the year 1784 again there a demand was made for the dues by Mahadji to be paid to Ratanlal.⁴

Besides demand for money and resultant threats by Shinde's to Jaipur rulers, territorial disputes were also quite frequent throughout the period. As a part of Maratha intervention in Jaipur succession issue the Jaipur ruler was forced to assign territories in lieu of tribute but they later were not ready to honour them, once the military presence had been replaced by the Maratha revenue collector, mostly civilians. *Kamavisdar* and his retinue of officials were bullied by the local Rajput zamindars and their men. *Kharita* records right from 1751 have instances of resistance to Maratha presence by local Rajputs. Jayappa Shinde wrote a warning letter to Madho Singh in 1751 on his interference in the Bundi and Newai area where the latter was trying to influence and corner local chief Kishan Singh to his side.⁵

Another *kharita* illustrating the unauthorised occupation and dispute over the Nenve (Nainwa) area was written in 1759⁶ it mentioned the area being taken

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No 136, Bhadon Badi 2, 1828/1771

² *Gwalior Kharita* No 141, Jeth Badi 6, 1830/1773

³ *Gwalior Kharita* No 114, Sawan Badi 9, 1832/1775

⁴ *Gwalior Kharita* No 101, Magh Sudi 9, 1841/1784

...इहांतै रतनलालजी की बिदाकरी है जो राजपास पौहचंगे सो उहांतै ऐवज की सरबराही करके ऐवज इहां को भेज देंउगें उहां को इहां को मुकदमां येक ही है...

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No 155, Jeth Sudi 7, 1808/1751

⁶ *Gwalior Kharita* No 175, Sawan Sudi 12, 1816/1759

over by the local people who needed to be warned from encroaching upon those areas in future.

Another area in Jaipur where the territorial dispute was a flash point was the famous Ranthambhor Fort where Marathas staked a claim since beginning due to the strategic importance of the Fort, in 1758 Jankoji Shinde and Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao protested unauthorized occupation of the said fort. They asked Madho Singh to vacate the fort and to stop the disturbance being created there by his men.¹ Mughal emporor had granted the Ranthambor Fort to the Jaipur ruler in 1753.² And it was considered a vital stronghold for maintaining control over the Rajasthan region since it was handed over to Akbar by the Hada chief of Bundi Rao Surjan in 1569.³

Kharita records also shows that areas claimed by Shinde and Holkar as part of tribute from Jaipur rulers faced regular encroachments from local *zamindars* and Jaipur officials. Tonk, Toda, Malpura and Rampura formed parts of initial claim by Holkar for their intervention in Jaipur succession dispute. However, despite presence of Holkar's *thanas* and *kamavisdars* the Jaipur ruler was consistently asked to stop disturbance by local *zamindars* and *amils* in tax collection and settlement of *thanas* in the area. Holkar's claim got weaker after the death of Malhar Rao. Even arch rival Mahadji Shinde wrote to Pratap Singh on behalf of Holkar to stop encroachments in *pargana* Tonk and to vacate Rampura belonging to Holkars.

Shindes too faced problems in occupation and control over Sambhar area which was a fifty-fifty division between Jodhpur and Jaipur. Jodhpur too contested Shinde's claim over Ajmer given to Marathas when they had visited Jodhpur in 1755 under Jayappa Shinde. There were also 12 villages of Borade that belonged to Jaipur in the bordering areas of Ajmer, that Shinde claimed but repeated requests for it were turned down.

¹ Gwalior *Kharita* No 166, Posh Badi 10, 1815/1758 ; Gwalior *Kharita* No 165, Magh Sudi 1, 1815/1758

...सीरकार को गढ़ रणथंभोर क्यों लियों वेसो न चाहिजे अबे ई वासते लिखांछां जो अपने सलुख करनी होय तो सीरकार को गढ़ छोड दयो...

² Sarkar, J N, *A History of Jaipur*, p.219

³ Ibid., p.190

Mahadji Shinde & His Sphere of Influence
Mathura as a Maratha Base

Maratha relations especially Shindes relations with Jaipur also need to be seen in the light of Shindes growing clout with the local chiefs on the outskirts of Jaipur. Chieftains of Rampura, Kota, Bundi, Karauli, Macheri (Alwar) lining the eastern boundaries of Jaipur and Maratha territory. We have already discussed Holkar's relations with Chandawat Rajputs of Rampura, Kota was an ally of Shinde, Bundi was not that important in the local politics as the period progressed. Karauli chief had also become friendly with Mahadji over a period of time, the territory of this small principality acted as a buffer between the Jaipur and Shindes territory, Chambal River flew by the side of the Karauli's boundary with Shinde's territory. By 1785 the route to Jaipur from Shindes new base at Mathura passed through Karauli. In 1785 Mahadji's wrote to Pratap Singh "to escort his subject up to Karauli by facilitating his safety, by alerting the outposts (*chauki's*) and men on the way to Karauli while that person was returning from Pushkar".¹ Later on Karauli ruler played the role of an important ally when Mahadji went for the battle against the combined Rajput forces at Battle of Lalsot in 1787 and Battle of Patan and Merta in 1790.² For the retreating forces of Mahadji Shinde during the Lalsot campaign Karauli acted as a safe halting ground. Even later in 1790s Karauli chief remained an ally of Shinde and acted as a safe halting ground for Maratha forces. In 1791 "Jamadar Imam Khan and Mia Khan were sent from Shindes camp (Laskar) to Gwalior. But they escaped to Jaipur. On coming to know of it Mahadji wrote to Pratap Singh, "by providing 50 troops escort them up to Karauli."³

Mathura became Mahadji Shindes retiring place in the 1780s and later became an important Maratha centre. After victory at Agra Mahadji marched to Mathura in Jan-March, 1785⁴ which shows that he was staying and operating from Mathura after he had subjugated the Gohad Jats and finished his business in Malwa. In 1785 Mahadji is found asking Pratap Singh from his camp at Mathura to

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.102, Asoj Sudi 7, 1842/1785

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar, J N(trans.&ed.), pp.3-5

³ *Gawalior Kharita* No.46, Jeth Badi 10, 1848/1791

⁴ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihāsik Patravali*, L.2/p.21

provide escort to Walaji Mahadev who was going to Pushkar near Ajmer.¹ It seems that around this time Mahadji preferred managing his affairs in the North by camping at Mathura rather than Ujjain, Shindes headquarter since beginning. After the Lalsot Campaign, Jadunath Sarkar says, "Throughout the two years and a half, from July 1788 to December 1790, Mahadji remained at Mathura without once visiting the Emperor, though so near to Delhi, nor did he march anywhere in Hindustan."² In fact Mahadji Shinde once wrote to Peshwa about not to force him to attack on Mathura as it was an important religious centre of the Hindus. Marathas had eyed Mathura since the very beginning of the Maratha expansion in the North.

Mathura was centrally located for military operations in Rajasthan, Delhi, Agra, as well as Malwa and Bundelkhand; Shinde could easily rotate his military forces around this sphere of influence in the 1780s and 1790s. Most of his campaigns in the North during the 1780s and 1790s were monitored from Mathura and was also his base camp for all military operations in the above mentioned sphere of influence. More precisely, Mathura was close to Kota, Agra and Gwalior his main garrison towns. Shinde regularly received reports at his camp in Mathura about military preparations going on at Gwalior where guns were being forged in 1780s his artillery.³ Shindes had a foundry at Gwalior to manufacture and supply guns.⁴ Shinde regularly received reports at his camp in Mathura about military preparations going on at Gwalior where guns were being forged in 1780s his artillery.⁵ Shinde started using Mathura more often as his permanent retreating base from his military campaigns too as it happened after the Lalsot Campaign in 1787.

Mathura was during this period of Mahadji's stay visited by all important leaders and the local elites. It was at Mathura that Mahadji suffered severe illness making any work impossible for him in 1789. Ali Bahadur was also camped at

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.102, Asoj Sudi 7, 1842/1785

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar p.17

³ *Ibid.*, p.25

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.25 Raj Muhammad, *darogha* of *topkhana* received 20 guns from Gwalior at his artillery park and 12 other guns were reported to be arriving the next day, after the Lalsot debacle Shinde made extensive preparations to fight Jaipur forces. Large numbers of guns were manufactured at Gwalior and assembled. Chaudhri Man Singh of the *topkhana* reported that 30 small and 5 large guns had reached the artillery park. On 10th October, 1789

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.25

Mathura during this period of Mahadji's illness and Himmat Bahadur who was suspected of practicing black magic on Mahadji took refuge in Ali Bahadur's camp when Mahadji tried to arrest him.¹ In fact *vakils* of Jaipur and Jodhpur too were present in Mathura camp in July 1789.² Shinde also summoned Major Palmer from Agra to Mathura in July 1789 and also waited here for Tukoji Holkar, who arrived from South on 30th July, 1789.³ Mahadji's hold over areas near Mathura then extended up to the Ganga River further north. In November, 1789, Mahadji built a bridge of boats over the Jamuna at Mathura in order to go for a bath in the Ganges.⁴ Chait Singh ruler of Banaras was then at Mahadji's camp and accompanied him for the bathing.⁵

In fact at Mathura only, Mahadji Shinde, Tukoji Holkar and Ali Bahadur held discussions on their strained relations on account of Himmat Bahadur in Nov., 1789 and their demands for a share in Shindes acquisitions in Hindustan.⁶ Shinde granted areas to Tukoji and Ali Bahadur in the North (*Hindustani mulk*) to conciliate them. Mahadji's camp received regular correspondence from Delhi Court too.⁷

In 1791 Shinde's *Karbhari* Abaji Raghunath refers to Mathura as *Sardar* Camp i.e. camp of Shinde chief, Mahadji.⁸ Local elites regularly visited Mathura to express their loyalty to Shinde and to discuss matters related to local politics.⁹ After the conclusion of the Anglo-Maratha War, Shinde was concentrating on political affairs, mostly within the so called Hindustan or North India territory. Territory North of Chambal and Yamuna rivers happened to be major scene of action of his newly raised military forces led by the European mercenaries. Staying at Mathura also meant Mahadji greater proximity with the British Agents after the Anglo- Maratha war and also with the Mughal Emperor. Shinde started using

¹ Ibid., pp.17-18

² Ibid., p.21

³ Ibid., p.18

⁴ Ibid., p.28

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p.27

⁷ Ibid., p.30, In the beginning of December 1789 Mahadji received terrified appeals from the Emperor about not to leave him unguarded, against a possible attack on Delhi by Mirza Ismail Beg

⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No.36/4 Kartik Sudi 1, 1848/1791

⁹ Ibid.

Mathura more often as his permanent retreating base from his military campaigns too.

Maratha Revenue Arrangements in Jaipur and Jodhpur

The last phase of Maratha expansion in Rajasthan also saw growth of *Ijara* System in place of regular revenue assignments. Since badly disturbed areas due to constant warfare were not yielding optimum revenue amount through normal course of revenue collection by the local *jagirdars*, contract farming was on the rise. Land was awarded in *ijara* to financially sound parties in place of *jagir* assignments. Merchants and traders whose regular trading activities were affected found it lucrative to provide financial security to *ijara* bidders as well as themselves later entered the business of getting *ijaras* awarded in their name. Moreover, *ijara* as alternative revenue arrangement was on the rise from the 1730s in the Jaipur region¹ and became a normal feature of the land revenue system of the Jaipur state after the death of Sawai Jai Singh in 1743.²

Ijara or contract farming became an effective mechanism of revenue collection during the first half of the 18th century in the Jaipur - Delhi region as Mughals grew weaker and their income from the *Khalsa* land also started drying up. *Ijaras* awarded by the Mughal ruler were instrumental in expansion of the Jaipur state on the outskirts, towards south & south-east during the period of Sawai Jai Singh. Assignments in the form of *Ijara* of Mughal *parganas* on the borders of Jaipur state were mostly made due to diminishing returns from those *parganas* to the Mughals. But as the Mughal power weakened in the areas bordering Jaipur state those Mughal *parganas* held in *ijara* were incorporated in the Jaipur territory by Sawai Jai Singh. Jaipur ruler to effectively manage revenue flow from such *parganas* held as *ijara* were further sub contracted to the local *zamindars*, *mahajans* and *ryots* of the Jaipur region.

As Marathas came to Jaipur territory in the second half of the 18th century, Jaipur rulers too faced problems in realizing full payments from their *jagirdars* after the period of Ishwari Singh. 1750 onwards, as more and more areas were affected due to widespread Maratha presence in the Jaipur region, *ijara* contracts were made to realize maximum possible amount by the Jaipur ruler from the

¹ Gupta, S P, *Agrarian System of Eastern Rajasthan (1650-1750)*, Delhi, 1986

² Singh, Dilbagh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants: Rajasthan in the 18th Century*, Delhi, 1990, p.129

khalsa villages. As early as 1758, “deserted and ruined villages were given in *ijara* on a sliding scale of revenue demand with an annual increase in the *jama* up to five years till it reached the normal demand.”¹ As pressure mounted further due to the growing Maratha demands in the year’s of Maratha presence in the region, revenue collection became more and more difficult. With the growing disturbances in the countryside *jama* collection declined, *jagirdar*’s *hasil* also shrank greatly and were unable to make contribution to the state.² In such times *ijara* became the most sought after method of realising maximum possible income from those affected areas in the Jaipur region. This has been established in the *pargana* wise study made by Dilbagh Singh for the period 1750-1800.³ Revenue from *Ijara* as percentage of total revenue saw significant rise in *pargana* Chatsu, Bahatri, Dausa, Malarna and Lalsot. Only in *pargana* Jaipur where the rise was not so marked probably as it was under close supervision of the Jaipur ruler and so relatively secure from any kind of disturbance.⁴

In the face of acute problem of payment of the salaries and stiff opposition to their presence Maratha sardars too found it more convenient to go for *ijara* contracts in the Rajasthan region to realize the revenue from areas brought under their control, during the last phase of their domination over the Rajput chiefs of Rajasthan. Mahadji Shinde got Sambhar area under Jaipur’s control from the Jaipur ruler.⁵ Sambhar was an important salt producing centre of North India which was a fifty-fifty division between Jaipur and Jodhpur states.⁶ Income from the salt trade for both sides was rupees one lakh each.⁷ Shinde granted the Sambhar areas in *ijara* to traders operating there as it was at great distance from Shinde’s nearest stronghold in the region and fell on the Jaipur - Jodhpur boundary with strong local resistance to Maratha presence.⁸

¹ Singh, Dilbagh , *Local and Land Revenue Administration of the State of Jaipur from 1750-1800*, Ph. D Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University, 1975, p. 257.

² Singh, Dilbagh, *The State, Landlords and Peasants*, p.12

³ Ibid., pp.129-140

⁴ Ibid., pp.138-140

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.99, Phalgun Badi 11, 1841/1784

⁶ *Marwar –Maratha Aitihasik Patravali, Parampara*, Vol.93-94, 1990, No. 22/p.103

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Gwalior Kharita* No.103, Jeth Badi 13, 1842/1785

But even traders whom Shinde awarded Sambhar tracts in *ijara* found it difficult to operate and reported loss in income.¹ Later Mahadji appointed Seth Gangaram and Rajaram for taking over the work of *amil* and *faujdar* of Sambhar to handle this important revenue assignment.² Another instance of *ijara* grant due to difficulty in making collection comes from *pargana* Tonk occupied by the Holkars. Tukoji Holkar transferred the existing *mamlatdar* of *pargana* Tonk Pandurang Shivaji and appointed Kripal Singh Sikh to handle the *pargana* in 1796.³ In fact it appears that Tukoji was taking measures to improve Maratha hold and complained about the damages and losses in Churu and Pipalu areas of *pargana* Tonk by the local *bhomias* who were trying to overthrow Maratha representatives.⁴ Acute problem of cash payment of the promised tribute and other charges by the Jaipur state to the Marathas towards the close of the century prompted Shinde to assign Jaipur tribute dues in contract too, to his military generals to meet the military expenditure on salary of the troops, arms and weapons, collectively described as *faujkharch*. In 1791 Mahadji Shinde when found it difficult to realize tribute amount he issued a veiled threat to Jaipur *diwan* for non compliance in payment of *mamlat* dues and assigned the same pending dues of rupees 11 lakhs to his officials Gopal Raghunath and Jivaji Ballal in *faujkharch*.⁵ These Maratha officials took advance payment from the bankers and spent the amount on military expenditure during the year and at the end of the year asked Jaipur ruler to pay the amount to the merchant as per the letter issued by the bankers.⁶

Acute money payment problem before the Battle of Patan forced Mahadji Shinde to ask for a loan of rupees 20 lakhs from Aba Nayak Seth and other bankers on the assignment of the income of the Ujjain *mahals* in February 1790.⁷ On 24th June 1791, Dharamdas Seth came and interviewed him (Mahadji) on behalf of the

¹ *Gwalior Kharita* No.118, Baisakh Badi 1, 1843/1786; *Gwalior Kharita* No.104, Sawan Sudi 6, 1843/1786

² *Gwalior Kharita* No.119, Mah Sudi 5, 1843/1786

³ *Indore Kharita* No. 299, Bhadon Sudi 12, 1853/1796 & *Indore Kharita* No.300 Kartik Sudi 1, 1853/1796

⁴ *Indore Kharita* No.300, Kartik Sudi 1, 1853/1796

⁵ *Gwalior Kharita* No.27&35, Chaitra Budi 5, 1848/1791

⁶ *Indore Kharita* No.249, Phalgun, Badi 3, 1848/1791

⁷ *Sindhia As Regent of Delhi*, J N Sarkar(ed), p.35

Shahpurawala, offering to deliver the tribute soon.¹ Similarly in the year 1792 Shinde's military general De Boigne was given in contract the tribute money of the Jaipur *mamlat* for the year 1792 to meet his military expenditure.²

SHINDE AND HOLKAR'S RELATIONS WITH RATHOR'S OF MARWAR (1785-94)

Rajput state of Marwar was also opposed to Maratha presence in their area since the beginning. An earlier study by G R Parihar³ on Maratha relations with Rathor rulers points out continued resistance to Maratha presence in Marwar till the end of the 18th Century. In fact Marwar rulers granted villages in *jagirs* to the Rathor war veterans and other accomplishments like merchants involved in finance during the battles against the Marathas.⁴

First reported Maratha campaign in Marwar territory took place in early 1736 when Shinde and Holkar forced Abhay Singh's men to pay tribute when they surrendered after a long siege of the Merta Fort in April 1736. Abhay Singh was accompanying the Mughal Emperor when the Marathas entered Jodhpur.⁵ Between the years 1737 to 1742 Marathas entered Rajasthan many a times but Jodhpur seem to have been remained untouched by Maratha army. Succession problem in Jodhpur had drawn Sawai Jai Singh in the feud between Abhay and Bakht Singh. Jai Singh had extended support to Ratan Singh brother of Abhay Singh.

During this period since the Merta agreement to pay tribute by Rathor was actually not seriously followed, collections remained poor. The public at large resisted the Marathas. They preferred to quit their settlements in villages and lit fire to them rather than to make any payment. Even Abhay Singh evaded the payment of the tribute.

Opportunity for Maratha intervention came when Abhay Singh annoyed with the activities of Bakht Singh hired the services of Holkar in 1748 in lieu of Rs 11,000 per day. But Holkar had to give attention to Jaipur affairs first as Madho Singh challenged the coronation of Ishwari Singh. However, the Rathor brothers

¹ Ibid., p.52

² *Gwalior Kharita* No 47, Ashad Sudi 1 1849/1792

³ Parihar, G. R., *Marwar and The Marathas* (1724-1843), Jodhpur, 1968, pp.265-275

⁴ Ibid., Appendix, pp. 265-275

⁵ Ibid., pp.54 -55

reconciled on intervention of Malhar Rao Holkar. Abhay Singh's men under Manaroop Chand Bhandari went with Holkar to sort out Jaipur succession dispute and afterwards Holkar met Abhay Singh at Pushkar near Ajmer. Maratha representative Krishnaji Jagannath reported that both had developed brotherly relations. Both exchanged turbans, dined on the same table and thus developed close relationship. Since then relations were cordial between the successive rulers of Marwar and the Holkar Family.¹ In the later years Holkar didn't have much to do in the expansion of Maratha power in Marwar. It was the Shinde family which made Marwar their exclusive zone of military domination and tribute collection in the second half of the 18th Century.²

After the death of Abhay Singh in 1751 his brother Bakht Singh took over as the ruler of Jodhpur State. Marathas were invited by Ram Singh son of Abhay Singh in July 1751 as he was left out in the race for the Jodhpur throne. But there was no immediate Maratha intervention in Marwar as Maratha sardars were involved elsewhere in the North. It was only in June 1754 that Raghunath Rao asked Jayappa Shinde to march to Marwar after he came back from his campaigns in the Gangetic Doab region.

On entering Marwar Jayappa was joined by Ram Singh's forces too. Meanwhile, the Jodhpur ruler Bakht Singh died suddenly in 1754 and his son Bijay Singh now stood up for the same cause. Jayappa Shinde went after Marwar army led by Bijay Singh. Shinde chief successfully evicted Bijay Singh from Merta. Bijay Singh fled to Nagor chased by the Shinde forces. Bijay Singh took up position inside the Fort of Nagor. But at Nagor the siege lasted for a year testing the strength of Maratha army in the desert conditions without adequate food and water. Bijay Singh even opened negotiations but Jayappa demanded 50 lakhs of rupees, an impossible amount.

Seeing the siege last for so long Malhar Rao Holkar and Raghunath Rao extended help but Jayappa ignored support as he wanted to accomplish the task on his own. Jayappa also ignored Raghunath Rao's suggestion to conclude the war. The prolonged siege later proved disastrous as Bijay Singh made gains and recovered his position at Jalor and Jodhpur and while the siege at Nagor was

¹ Ibid., pp.59-61

² Ibid., pp.95-96

continuing. Meanwhile as the siege at Nagore was putting pressure on both sides, Bijay Singh opened peace talks on 24th July 1755, but the negotiations prolonged and turned hot and bloody. Rathore men lost their cool by Jayappa's disparaging remarks as he challenged their pride. In retaliation Jayappa Shinde was murdered by Rathore men.¹

Negotiations following Jayappa's murder as Marathas were now in overwhelming strength thanks to the reinforcements sent by Peshwa forced Bijay Singh to cede Ajmer fort and district to the Marathas along with the sovereign rights.² Also a *faujkharch* of 50 lakhs was to be paid in three years time.³ But later on Ajmer was recaptured by the Rathore forces from the Marathas and remained a bone of contention along with the *faujkharch* amount that was never actually paid. These two unfulfilled promises were cause of later conflict between Jodhpur and Shindes forces during the 1780s and the 1790s.

Maratha relations with the Jodhpur ruler and its impact on local polity, economy and society are illustrated in the correspondences of the Maratha *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath to the Peshwa and Nana Phadnis during the period 1785-1794.⁴ Jodhpur ruler's relations with Mahadji Shinde come to light from the messages sent by Maratha *vakil* to his masters in the Poona court. From Jodhpur ruler's side Kriparam Joshi was serving as *vakil* in Mahadji Shinde's court in 1785 and Ramrao Sadashiv was Shindes *vakil* at the Jodhpur court.⁵ Peshwa's *vakil* Krishnaji Jagganath at Jodhpur had access to the letters written by Kriparam Joshi to his master Vijay Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur from Shinde's court. Payment of tribute to Mahadji Shinde by the Jodhpur ruler had become irregular since Maratha forces had left North India to rally around Nana Phadnis during the Anglo-Maratha war. Tribute for the past seven years had become due from the Jodhpur ruler to Mahadji Shinde as per the reports of the Maratha *vakil*. After the Maratha victory at Agra Shinde started applying pressure on the Jodhpur ruler to pay tribute through the officials of the Jodhpur state present in Shindes court. Mahadji now

¹ For the full details of the Jayappa Shinde's Marwar Campaign, See Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.2, pp.124-131

² Ibid., p.132

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali, Parampara*, Vol. 93-94, Rajasthani Shodh Sansthan, Jodhpur, 1990

⁵ Ibid., L.2/p.20

fresh from his victory at Agra was preparing for his march with his forces towards Jaipur. Shinde summoned Jodhpur *vakil* Kriparam Joshi and asked him to leave his camp as Jodhpur ruler hadn't paid tribute. The Jodhpur *vakil* however pleaded for a reprieve of 15 days to consult his master at Jodhpur and for the payment of the tribute amount.

Expecting Maratha military threats as Mahadji was marching towards Jaipur from Agra in 1785, Marwar ruler under pressure arranged and dispatched *hundis* worth rupees 2 lakhs and 300 camels, 8 pairs of bullocks, 6 horses and items worth 50 thousand that included diamonds and jems, Multani *chint*, *pashmina* and arms towards Shindes camp. However, when Mahadji's return to Mathura after capturing Agra was reported instead of his direct march towards Jaipur, Vijay Singh asked the convoy carrying the *hundis* and other items to stop at Parbatsar pargana, 60 kilometers from Jodhpur.¹ Shindes were applying the pressure to pay instalments of even *Baisakh* month which was just over, however, the instalments of *Magh* and *Phalgun* were sent by the Marwar ruler which shows how badly Marathas were dependent on the tribute from the Rajput rulers for financing their campaign in the North.² Seeing the threat from Mahadji's forces Vijay Singh even contemplated paying 7 years backlog of *khandani* dues to Mahadji by asking his sardars to deposit money on account of *Rekh Bab* duty of rupees 50 imposed on the income one thousand and 10 rupees from the common people on every plough in order to pay the tribute to the Marathas.³

Besides the tribute amount the Marathas were also seeking control over Ajmer and its Fort as well as Sambhar which had been ceded to them earlier after Jayappa's murder in 1756 and the negotiations that followed. Jodhpur ruler had promised Ajmer pargana and the Fort, Sambhar and faujkharch amount (rupees 50 lakhs) to the Marathas.⁴ But later on Jodhpur ruler took over Ajmer from the Maratha control leading to later Maratha demand to restore Ajmer to them. Another act of Jodhpur ruler that hurt Shinde and Holkar both was his role in dispossessing them of their outposts in Mewar.⁵ Even Holkar *sardar* Tukoji in

¹ Ibid., L.2/p.21

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., L.2/p.22

⁴ Ibid., L.4/p.28, See the footnote, also on p.64

⁵ Ibid., L.5/p.34; L.7/pp.39-40

1788 reprimanded Vijay Singh's *vakil* Singhi Dola who had gone to meet him for the above acts of Jodhpur Rajputs.¹

But Rathor ruler was not willing to part with the sovereign rights over Ajmer rather he wanted to pay the fixed amount annually out of collections made from Ajmer and pay back all the pending dues.² In fact Jodhpur ruler's attachment with Ajmer is reflected in Peshwa's *vakil's* narration of Jodhpur ruler's feelings... "But Ajmer will remain ours. Whatever they ask for barring Ajmer is acceptable."³ Ajmer was strategically located, Mewar, Jodhpur, Hadauti (Kota-Bundi) could be controlled from here.⁴

The Lalsot Campaign was undertaken at the height of Jaipur & Jodhpur ruler's reluctance to pay tribute and the ongoing disturbances in areas claimed by the Marathas. The Rajput princes who had for years not paid a pice were asked to pay three crores of rupees by the Marathas.⁵ After the Lalsot Campaign, Krishnaji Jagannath in a letter written to Peshwa on 30th August 1787 conveys Jodhpur rulers stand towards the Marathas in the light of the stand off between combined Rajput forces of Jodhpur and Jaipur against the Maratha forces. Vijay Singh maintained that Jodhpur had paid the tribute due to Mahadji Shinde and had also been paying 2 to 4 lakhs rupees extra to keep Marathas satisfied. Secondly he felt that Mahadji's action against the Rajputs of Khichiwada and Gohad Jats were not justified. He also felt that Macheri ruler Pratap Singh and Jaipur's earlier Diwan Khushhaliram Bohra advised Mahadji Shindes to take up Lalsot Campaign in order to destroy Jaipur and Jodhpur states. Vijay Singh expressing his views to Krishnaji Jagannath maintained that it was on Macheri chief's advice that Mahadji marched to Jaipur as Jaipur had only 13 lakh rupees dues out of 63 lakh to be paid and the talks were already on for payment of the pending dues.⁶

Vijay Singh however also faced internal problems from the Raajput chiefs of Kishangarh and Rupnagar which lay on the borders of Jodhpur state in the

¹ Ibid., L.7/p.39

² Ibid., L.14/p.64

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., L.27/p.127

⁵ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar(ed), See Foreword by P M Joshi, p.i

⁶ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, L.3/pp.26-27

south-east.¹ Kishangarh sought Maratha sardar Tukoji Holkar and Mahadji Shindes's support against the Rathore Rajputs of Jodhpur who had taken Kishangarh under siege in 1788² on account of long standing territorial dispute.³ Kishangarh paid 8 lakhs of rupees to Tukoji Holkar to seek their support for ending the siege by the Jodhpur forces.⁴ Tukoji Holkar's support to Kishangarh and reprimanding Vijay Singh's vakil Singhi Dola for occupation of Ajmer belonging to the Peshwa also indicate a shift in Holkar's longstanding friendly relations with the Jodhpur ruler in the past.

In order to rally the Rajput forces against the Marathas Vijay Singh even sought the support of Devi Singh Hada brother of Ummed Singh, ruler of Bundi. Vijay Singh professing his support for the Jaipur state also coaxed Dalel Singh Hada to visit Jaipur and share his valuable experience of fighting against the forces of Malhar Rao in the past.⁵ Vijay Singh promised *jagir* worth one lakh rupees, an elephant and a palki to Bundi chief and 50 thousand rupees hereditary *jagir* to his grand son. But Dalel Singh probably declined the offer due to his old age.⁶

Vijay Singh expecting Maratha threats persuaded Ghulam Kadir and Ismail Beg to join Rajput forces against Mahadji Shinde and even paid them money to win their support. He sent a *hundi* worth 25 thousand rupees to Ismail Beg.⁷

According to another letter written by Krishnaji Jagannath to Peshwa in January 1789 Vijay Singh was alarmed when the news of the capture of Ghulam Kadir by Ali Bahadur and Mahadji Shindes men and Maratha control over Delhi was known to him. Vijay Singh immediately sent his *vakil* Lalji Mehta to the Jaipur court expressing his concern over the growing power of the Maratha forces in the North. Vijay Singh made Jaipur ruler known about his plan to inviting the Afghan ruler Taimur Shah and destroy Maratha power as none of the Muslim power in North India were capable of defeating the Marathas.⁸ According to Vijay

¹ Ibid., L.2/p.23 & L.5/p.30

² Ibid., L.7/p.41

³ Ibid., L.2/p.23

⁴ Ibid., L.7/p.41

⁵ Ibid., L.5/p.35-36

⁶ Ibid., L.5/p.36

⁷ Ibid., L.5/p.33

⁸ Ibid., L.8 & L.9

Singh Taimur Shah was dead against the Marathas. Jodhpur's *vakil* Lalji Mehta also wrote letter to the Jaipur ruler to mobilize his nobles.¹

From the *vakil*'s letter Jodhpur ruler's feelings towards Marathas were revealed. According to Krishnaji Jagannath, "Vijay Singh wrote to Afghan ruler that Marathas were not only the enemy of Muslims but also of the Rajputs and both Jodhpur and Jaipur state would support the Afghan ruler's campaign against the Marathas."²

Vijay Singh also tried to win over Kota Chief Zalim Singh to his side. He promised Kota *vakil* Mohammad Sharif that he would help them settling their tribute due to Tukoji Holkar provided Kota severed friendship with Mahadji Shinde. Vijay Singh told Kota *vakil* that their friendly ties with the Marathas had made them more powerful. Vijay Singh also desired the Kota *vakil* to patch up the ties between Ummed Singh of Bundi and Kota's Zalim Singh and also with Jodhpur as Rajputs were one against the Marathas.

Vijay Singh and Tukoji Holkar also tried to interfere in Udaipur court politics where Maharana was being threatened by Salumbar's Chundawat chief Rawat Bhim Singh. Maharana was getting protection from Kota chief against the threats from Bhim Singh as the latter also happened to be an enemy of Zalim Singh. Jodhpur ruler and Tukoji wanted to win over the Maharana to their side and sever his ties with Kota chief. Zalim Singh apprehended this move of Vijay Singh and Tukoji Holkar and sought Mahadji's views by sending his *vakil* to him. Mahadji then wrote to Tukoji, "Our friendship ties with Kota are quite old please don't try to disturb them that would be better."³ Vijay Singh in February 1790 even tried to win back Macheri ruler Pratap Singh, a Maratha ally to the Rajput side by offering him *jagir* worth one lakh rupees. Vijay Singh in a message to Macheri ruler felt that the latter by allying with the Marathas was endangering the unity among the Rajput chiefs and persuaded him to meet Jaipur ruler. However, Macheri ruler set certain preconditions before Jaipur and Jodhpur ruler. Khushaliram Bohra should be brought back as *diwan* of Jaipur, Daulatram Haldia should be freed and handed over to them and Jodhpur should negotiate with the

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., L.8/p.43

³ Ibid., L.8/p.44

Marathas as per the wishes of the Macheri ruler. Jodhpur and Jaipur ruler couldn't agree to such preconditions.¹

In February 1790 Vijay Singh as per Krishnaji Jagannath's report sent his vakil Shobhachand Bhandari to seek the support of Ismail Beg. Vijay Singh asked him to join him and the Jaipur ruler and not the Marathas keeping in mind the old ties. Further Vijay Singh directed Ismail beg to enter Rajasthan through Bikaner state to join the Rajput forces as the Marathas were present in Delhi.² Vijay Singh even won over Najaf Kuli to Rajput side by sending his vakil Manrup Bhandari as reported by Krishnaji Jagannath in March 1790.³

Despite Jodhpur and Jaipur coming close to fight the Marathas, Vijay Singh had doubts about Jaipur ruler's intentions as the latter had promised Rupnagar to Pratap Singh of Macheri after the Kishangarh ruler had been defeated.⁴ Considerable doubts were also expressed by Rathore noble Mahesh Das Kumpawat about the fighting abilities of the Kachawaha Rajputs based on the past experiences. In the past Rathore forces had suffered great losses while fighting along with the Kachhawa forces as latter had the tendency to leave the battle field maintained the Rathore noble Mahesh Das Kumpawat.⁵

Jodhpur Rajputs and its ruler Vijay Singh considered their control over Ajmer against the wishes of the Marathas and the payment of the dues as the main reason of conflict with the Marathas as it appears from the letter of the Maratha vakil.⁶ Jodhpur ruler even now regretted having taken over Ajmer from Maratha control in the past.⁷

From Krishnaji Jagannath's letter dated 9th March 1790 it is evident that apprehending threats from Mahadji Shinde in the aftermath of the destruction of Khichiwada and Gohad, Jodhpur ruler wanted to send his *vakil* to Peshwa for his intervention in the matter of payment of tribute to the Marathas. Only after talks

¹ Ibid., L.10/p.48

² Ibid., L.10/p.49

³ Ibid., L.11/p.49

⁴ Ibid., L.11/p.51, here probably Pratap Singh has been misquoted as Amar Singh

⁵ Ibid., L.11/p.54

⁶ Ibid., L.10/p.47

⁷ Ibid.

with Peshwa were not successful Vijay Singh wanted to pay the tribute.¹ Vijay Singh tried hard to take Peshwa into confidence by sending his views on tribute payment in Feb-March 1790 through a messenger and eagerly waited for his reply and even asked Krishnaji Jagannath many a times.²

Krishnaji Jagannath's letter of 13th May 1790 reveals last minute differences between Jaipur and Jodhpur ruler over Ismail Beg's support to the Rajputs on condition of ceding territories and payments to be made for the expenditure during the campaign. Jaipur ruler was against such assurances for territory and money to Isamil Beg as promised by the Jodhpur ruler. Jaipur ruler also expressed his unhappiness over the way Jodhpur had occupied Ajmer. Further the Jaipur ruler conveyed to his counterpart that Marathas enmity was mainly with Jodhpur and Jaipur was capable of tackling them.³ However, Vijay Singh removed all doubts in the mind of the Jaipur ruler by dispatching his representative Jivraj Purohit and both side agreed to equally share the monthly expenditure of rupees one lakh on Ismail Beg.

In May 1790 Maratha forces entered Rajasthan through the territory of the Macheri ruler and camped 15 *kos* from the place where Ismail beg had camped. Mahadji Shinde stayed behind at Mathura, Ambaji Ingle, Rane Khan, Rayaji Patil, Jiva Bakshi led the Maratha forces.⁴ Jaipur forces assembled 15 *kos* from Jaipur. Ismail beg's forces were joined by Vijay Singh's five thousand troops and camped separately from the Jaipur forces which consisted of 8 thousand cavalry.⁵ Ismail Beg's forces consisted of 5 thousand cavalry, 14 thousand infantry and 110 pieces of guns. Four thousand Rathor forces under Ganagaram Bhandari had camped at Moti Dungri near Jaipur, and later Shahmal Lodha too joined them with five thousand forces. Vijaychand Singhi too was camping 18 *kos* away from Ismail Beg's camp with 4 to 5 thousand Rathor forces.

When the battle lines were almost drawn, Marathas felt that the scope for averting the war lay with the Rathor Rajputs as they were responsible for the whole

¹ Ibid. L.12/p.56

² Ibid. L.13/p.58

³ Ibid., L.13/pp.58-59

⁴ Ibid., L.13/p.59

⁵ Ibid.

build up on both sides and they should first pay the dues. Ambaji Ingle was especially adamant on this issue that Rathores should first pay the dues. Later Tukoji Holkar, Shivaji Vitthal, Ambaji Ingle and Rane Khan decided to send a letter to Vijay Singh asking him to pay money for Ajmer, also asking both Jaipur and Jodhpur not to ally with Ismail Beg and give up their claim for Delhi-Agra region.

The Battle of Patan in June 1790 was fought in such circumstances. Before the Battle of Patan Peshwa and Rathor ruler Vijay Singh did clear their stand to settle the issue of Ajmer and the pending dues without fighting another war. Peshwa as it appears from *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath's letter persisted with the Maratha demand for Ajmer and payment of the dues. Vijay Singh on the other hand promised to pay the dues but wasn't ready to surrender Ajmer. In fact the Jodhpur ruler was ready to accept any demand other than surrender of Ajmer and send his *vakil* to Peshwa's court for negotiations. Thus the pre negotiations talks between Marathas and the Rajputs reached a dead end 20 days before the Battle of Patan.¹

However, after successive defeats of the combined Rajput forces at Patan and Rathore forces at Merta, Rathor ruler Vijay Singh changed his stand on Ajmer and payment of the dues as conveyed to *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath. However, fresh demands made by the Marathas, to grant half of the Marwar state including Jalor city was not acceptable to the Rathor ruler. Jodhpur ruler was ready to fight another battle with 20,000 Rathore forces.²

During the Negotiations that followed the defeat at Merta Rathore ruler Vijay Singh was keen to include Peshwa's *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath in the negotiation process to keep the negotiations fair as the Jodhpur ruler had no faith in Mahadji Shinde's words and feared the latter going back on his own words. So Vijay Singh maintained that he would agree to all terms that were negotiated in the presence of the Peshwa's *vakil*. The negotiations went on to several rounds; there were several set of proposals from the two sides before arriving on the final terms and conditions. In the beginning Marathas demanded *faujkharch* amount of rupees 2 crore 35 lakhs, the pending dues, half of the Marwar state given to Ram

¹ Ibid., L.14/p.64

² Ibid., L.15/p.66

Singh and three years tribute (*mamlat*) of Ajmer. Later the *faujkharch* amount was revised and made one crore rupees cash, Sambhar as well as hefty *faujkharch* amount of rupees 2 crore 35 lakhs to meet the war expenses (*faujkharch*). However, later Peshwa's *vakil* says that Rathors agreed to pay rupees one crore cash and some *parganas* were to be handed over for the rest of the amount.¹ On this Marathas proposed pending tribute from Ajmer and the *faujkharch* amount. According to Krishnaji Jagannath's estimates pending dues were of rupees 15 lakhs 66 thousand and tribute of Ajmer amounted to rupees 9 lakhs for three year at the rate of 3 lakhs per year. Marathas now demanded rupees 24 lakhs 66 thousand in cash.² Marathas also demanded two *parganas* to settle *faujkharch*. Sambhar was also decided to be given to Marathas. All these talks were carried on in the presence of the Maratha *vakil*. But Mahadji Shinde's men didn't allow Peshwa's *vakil* to take part in the negotiation process that was carried on later on with the Rathors. But Peshwa's *vakil* kept a close eye on the negotiation process from outside and as per details gathered by him in the talks carried on without his presence. Shinde's men demanded half of the Marwar state and rupees 56 lakhs and interest on it, due from the time of Jayappa Shinde.³ In another dispatch of the same date from Shindes camp at Merta, *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath expresses Nana Farnavis' view point on transfer of Ajmer to the Marathas who also felt that Rathors should hand over Ajmer to the Marathas along with the *faujkharch* amount as they had done at the time of Jayappa Shinde.⁴ Peshwa's *Vakil* also communicated Rathor Rajputs resolve to die fighting rather than handing over half of Marwar territory to the Marathas.⁵

In the next round of negotiations that were probably carried on in January 1791 again Peshwa's *vakil* was not allowed to take part despite Vijay Singh's insistence for a mediator's presence to avoid any misunderstanding in the future.⁶ So Krishnaji Jagannath was sent back before the negotiations started. Marathas now demanded 40 lakhs as *faujkharch* and to settle this amount demanded

¹ Ibid., L.16/p.68

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., L.17/p.70

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., L.18/p.73

Sambhar, Nawa and Didwana in *patta*, for occupation of Ajmer by the Rathors Marathas demanded rupees 15 lakhs and wanted Jodhpur ruler to vacate Ajmer along with the fort.¹ During the negotiation process two important Rathor nobles Budh Singh (Uncle of Sawai Singh Champawat) and Vijay Singh's official Bhawaniram Bhandari was kept hostage by Mahadji Shinde. Finally Mahadji Shinde got in writing (*Ikararnama*) from Rathor noble Budh Singh the following terms and conditions for the peace settlement:

- A. For rupees 40 lakhs as *faujkharch* territories falling under Sambhar, Didwana and Nawa *parganas* were to be assigned on *patta* to the Marathas.
- B. Rupees 15 lakhs were to be paid as the dues for occupation of Ajmer by the Rathors. Rupees 7 lakhs were to be paid in cash and the rest were to be paid in instalment.
- C. Ajmer and its Fort were to be vacated by the Rathor forces

In a letter written to Nana Farnavis on 28th May 1791 Peshwa's *vakil* at Jodhpur court informed transfer of half of the Sambhar territory belonging to Jodhpur worth 100,000 rupees along with a *pargana* of 27 villages worth 1,00,000 to Mahadji Shinde.²

Letter dispatched from Delhi court to Peshwa however mentions that rupees 60 lakh were offered by the Jodhpur minister out of which rupees 40 lakhs were to be written off as compensation due to damage to the territory and the plunder of Merta and the remaining rupees 20 lakhs to be paid on the condition of Mahadji Shinde's troops evacuating Jodhpur territory.³ Jodhpur also agreed to give Rupnagar, Parbatsar and half of Sambhar as security till the agreed tribute was paid along with Ajmer and Garh Bithli.⁴ Ajmer and its Fort were to be handed over to Shinde⁵ and Jodhpur Raja was to occupy Merta but before that he had to vacate Ajmer.⁶ From the letter dispatched by the Peshwa's *vakil* on 28th May 1791 transfer of Ajmer to the Marathas is confirmed.⁷

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., L.22/p.102

³ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar, p.46

⁴ Ibid., 46

⁵ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, L.19/ p.75; *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar, p.46

⁶ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar, p.46

⁷ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, L.22/p.102

Marwar suffered greatly during the war with the Marathas. Also there was famine for the past two years in Marwar further aggravating the situation. According to Krishnaji Jagannath not even a single village was untouched from the Maratha and Ismail Beg's depredations. Maratha *vakil* felt that it would take at least three years to bring back prosperity in the whole region.¹

Jodhpur's internal politics slipped out of the hands of Vijay Singh soon after the negotiations with the Marathas were over. Vijay Singh's love for a low caste woman Gulab Rai Paswan and due to his old age all power now got concentrated in the hands of his lover Gulab Rai. Many officials of Vijay Singh had already been taken hostage by Mahadji Shinde. Bhawani Ram Bhandari who was very close to Mahadji Shinde was made diwan of Jodhpur and he brought many sardars to his side. After Mahadji's departure to Poona towards the end of 1791 his general Jivaji Ballal was made incharge of Marwar. But after the death of Vijay Singh in June 1793 Marwar plunged into a state of anarchy. Jivaji Ballal slowly lost his grip over the affairs of Marwar as the infighting among the Rathore sardars peaked.

Maratha *vakil*'s remark's in his letter² of 30th April 1794 are worth taking note of in the light of the rise of Maratha power in the North in the period of Balaji Baji Rao and Madhav Rao and subsequent transfer of power to the Maratha sardars.

*"Peshwa's lost his Charisma and all powerful position after delegating power in the North to his Sardars. Even tributes are not deposited in Peshwa's treasury. Earlier in the period of Shriamnt Peshwa late Nana Sahib (Balaji Baji Rao) and Shrimant Peshwa late Madhavrao through Jaipur, Kota, Bundi, Udaipur and Jodhpur vakils contributions and presents were sent to Peshwa honouring his high position. All the rulers were in control of the Peshwa... around 350 vakils were placed in the courts of various rulers in the North...."*³

Krishnaji Jagannath to Peshwa Baji Rao II,
30th April 1794.

¹ *Ibid.*, L.22/p.103

² *Ibid.*, L.27/p.124

³ *Ibid.*

HOW MARATHAS WON OVER THE RAJPUT FORCES IN RAJASTHAN

The final assault of Mahadji Shinde in 1787 and 1790-91 over the combined Rajput forces of Jaipur and Jodhpur on account of the refusal by the Jaipur ruler to pay tribute and consistent opposition to Maratha presence represents culmination of a long drawn process of Maratha penetration in Rajasthan. Mahadji's clout in the region was now more than any local power due to local support mobilized by Marathas over the long period of their stay and also due to their growing stature as powerful military force with European battalions. Smaller principalities on the borders of bigger Rajput states like Macheri (Alwar), Karauli, Kishangarh, Salumbar, Bundi and Kota were having territorial disputes with the bigger states and looked upto the Marathas for support during the 1780s and 1790s. In return Marathas received support from the chieftains of these principalities in form of military and local intelligence, safe bases for the army, supply of provision as well as armed support.

During the Lalsot Campaign Rajput forces also showed great unity against Maratha forces, son of Bikaner ruler arrived with 6,000 troopers at Sambhar to support the Jaipur ruler.¹ Even forces sent from Kota, Bundi and Khichis of Raghogarh joined Jaipur side.² Others like Ranjit Singh Jat, Datia and some Rajput chiefs couldn't decide as to whom to support.³

In fact retreat of Mahadji from Lalsot Campaign also encouraged rebellions in local provinces where Marathas were dominating. Tributary chiefs and rulers all over the North, who were waiting for such an opportunity raised their heads, drove out the Marathas from their *thanas*.⁴ Even in Rajput ruled states in Malwa where Marathas ruled saw rebellions after the Battle of Tunga.⁵

Among local elites whom Mahadji Shinde had won over were enterprising and locally powerful men who had ambition to rise by expanding their own

¹ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar(ed), p.5

² *Ibid.*, p.9

³ *Ibid.*, p.14

⁴ *Ibid.*, Appendix, "The Lalsot Campaign - As described by Faqir Khair-ud-din Allahabadi" in his *Ibratnamah*

⁵ Shivdatt Dan Barhat, *Sitamaui Rajya Ka Itihas*, p.58

dominions. While acquiring territories in their neighbourhood from the three big Rajput states of Jaipur, Marwar and Mewar they looked up to Shinde for support as by themselves they were no match to their powerful neighbours.

Macheri ruler Rao Raja Pratap Singh Naruka was a rebellious Rajput chieftain inhabiting Alwar area on the borders of Jaipur state in the east. He belonged to Naruka clan and rose from a very humble position. He had a *jagir* of just two and half villages in the beginning but due to his enterprising nature and hard work he was given independent status by the Mughal Emperor during the peak period in the 1780s.¹ Naruka clan chief started his career as supporter of the Jaipur ruler in the fight against Jawahar Singh Jat in 1767-68. Pratap Singh gathered Naruka clan into a strong state by usurping the Jaipur territory during the period of Prithvi Singh which soured his relations with the Jaipur State. During the period of his namesake Pratap Singh the Naruka chief was constantly in conflict with Jaipur ruler. Pratap Singh also referred as *Rao Raja* accompanied Mahadji Shinde through out the Lalsot Campaign and Battle in 1787. His closeness to Mahadji is evident from the way he was consulted by Shinde during the Lalsot Campaign and even while preparations were on for another attack after the Lalsot debacle.

Pratap Singh was present alongside Mahadji at Lalsot along with his *diwan* Ram Chand and a contingent of troops.² Mahadji Shinde is found consulting him before making any strategic move during the battle of Lalsot.³ In fact the decision to retreat from Lalsot in face of desertion of Mahadji's Hindustani troops was taken in consultation with Rao Raja who along with Rane Khan advised retreat with his camp in the centre as Jaipur Raja was dominant.⁴ Later Macheri ruler was also summoned by Mahadji when invasion on Jaipur was being planned in 1789; Ambaji Ingle the Maratha army commander of Mahadji's went to consult him with regard to the proposed invasion of Jaipur.⁵ Maratha *vakil Krishnaji Jagannath* posted at Jodhpur court in a letter to Peshwa dated 9th March 1790 describes Pratap

¹ Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.3, New Delhi, 1975, pp.224-234

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi* Sarkar, pp.5, 7, 9,12

³ Ibid., pp.7,12, 15

⁴ Ibid., p.12

⁵ Ibid., p.26

Singh creating trouble in Jaipur territory bordering Alwar.¹ During the battle of Patan in June 1790² Macheri ruler Pratap Singh with 15,000 horse fought against the forces of Mirza Ismail Beg who had defected to Jaipur side³ and Merta in September 1790, again Pratap Singh fought on Shinde's side .

Pratap Singh's ambition was to acquire more territory with Maratha support. He wanted to take over Patan after the battle there in June 1790 which Shinde's general Ambaji Ingle didn't agree and both of them approached Mahadji Shinde on this matter.⁴ Macheri ruler kept on asking for Patan but Ambaji didn't allow him to take Patan.⁵ Earlier also he was courting Mahadji when the latter was facing Gohad Jats in Malwa in 1784. Pratap Singh proposed that Qiledars of Ranthambore and Jaipur forts were under his control and if Shinde helped Man Singh son of Prithvi Singh in acquiring the Jaipur throne then both the forts could be given to him⁶ but Mahadji asked him to prove his integrity by first handing over the Alwar Fort.⁷ After Pratap Singh's death in Jan 1791⁸ his successor Bakhtawar Singh too was attached to Shindes. Shinde and his *karbhari* Abaji Raghunath sought his cooperation in 1791.⁹

Karauli ruler's presence on the Jaipur frontiers in the east too was vital for the Marathas as this small state separated Jaipur and Shinde's dominions west of Gwalior. In the past Karauli had experienced excessive tax collection from Jaipur revenue officials (*amils*) in the bordering Shahpura area¹⁰ and even their relation with Jaipur court was not very friendly in the past.¹¹ Now in 1784 Karauli was feeling the threats from presence of Maratha forces in their neighbourhood¹² and

¹ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, L. No.11/ p.55

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar, p.36

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, L.14/p.64

⁵ Ibid., L.14/p.65

⁶ Ibid., L.2/ pp.24-25

⁷ Ibid., L.2/ p.25

⁸ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar(ed), p.45

⁹ *Gwalior Kharita* No. 36/2 Baisakh Badi 9, 1848/1791; *Gwalior Kharita* No.36/9 Sawan Badi 8, 1848/1791; *Gawalior Kharita* No. 36/4, Kartik Sudi 1, 1848/1791

¹⁰ *Karauli-Jaipur Kharita* No. 88, Margashar Sudi 2, 1817/1760

¹¹ *Karauli-Jaipur Kharita* No.77, Asoj Badi 9, 1816/1759

¹² *Karauli-Jaipur Kharita* No. 149 Paush Sudi 9, 1841/1784; *Karauli-Jaipur Kharita* No.169, Baisakh Sudi 15, 1843/1786

was paying tribute to the Marathas (Shindes) as per the agreement.¹ In fact placed between two powerful states Karauli was not in a position to refuse support to Marathas, besides they were having problems with Jaipur state too being their powerful neighbour since long. "In fact Karauli Raja was loyal to Shinde, as the latter promised to restore Bijaigarh to him in 1787."²

In Persian newsletters dispatched from Jaipur court during the Lalsot campaign, Karauli chief is warned by Jaipur ruler to stop supply of provisions to Mahadji Shinde's camp.³ Karauli's location on Chambal River and direct access to Jaipur state was being exploited by Marathas in the campaign against Jaipur, their supplies coming from Gwalior passed through Karauli. On 11th July 1787 Jaipur ruler ordered 5 to 6 thousand men to assemble and cut off Mahadji's grain supply.⁴ Later on on 30th July the Rajputs cut off a grain convoy of 6,000 oxen and 700 camels coming to Shinde's camp with grain and other provisions. Maratha army was starving then, just a day before the final battle.⁵

Similarly Kishangarh on the frontiers of Jodhpur state had territorial dispute with the Jodhpur ruler. According to Maratha *vakil* at Jodhpur court in 1785 Kishangarh ruler Vridhi Singh asked for Parbatsar pargana for serving in Mewar for 18 months on behalf of Jodhpur state. But Bijay Singh was opposed to it. Jodhpur and Kishangarh had old enmity and 5 to 7 villages on the frontiers of the two states were allegedly occupied by Kishangarh *zamindars*. Tension again ran high on both sides when Jodhpur Rajputs plundered and destroyed 4 to 5 villages on the frontiers of the two states belonging to Kishangarh *zamindars*.⁶ On knowing this Kishangarh ruler sent his agent to Mahadji Shinde.⁷ Kishangarh ruler also appealed to Mahadji contesting Pratap Singh's coming to power when Prithivi Singh's son Man Singh from his wife and daughter of Kishangarh ruler was

¹ *Karauli-Jaipur Kharita* No.150, Ashad Sudi 5, 1841/1784; *Karauli-Jaipur Kharita* No.152, Jeth Badi 13, 1841/1784

² *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar(ed), p.5

³ *Ibid.*, pp.4 -5

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3

⁵ *Ibid.*, See Appendix , 'The Lalsot campaign - As described by Faqir Khairuddin Allahabadi' in his *Ibratnamah*'

⁶ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, L.2/p.23

⁷ *Ibid.*, L.2/p.24

captured and denied Jaipur throne.¹ Surat Singh, *diwan* of Kishangarh paid rupees 8 lakhs to Tukoji Holkar and invited both Tukoji Holkar and Shinde to Kishangarh with troops as Rathor forces surrounded Kishangarh from all sides cutting off their supplies.² Kishangarh also contested Rupnagar area with Jodhpur state. When Mahadji's forces defeated Rathors in battle of Merta, Rupnagar was returned to Kishangarh for a short period. Kishangarh was a safe ground for forces of Mahadji in 1790 when Ajmer was being claimed from Rathors after the battle of Merta. Even fight nearby Ajmer against Rathors later in Oct 1790 took place in alliance with Kishangarh chief from the Ajmer fort.³

In the affairs of Mewar too, Mahadji Shinde and Salumbar chief of *Chundawat* faction, opposed to Maharana of Udaipur, understood their common interest vis-à-vis Maharana of Udaipur and acted the Chundawat chief agreed to Shindes dictats.

Zalim Singh of Kota too made a difference in Udaipur politics as he was opposed to Salumbar chief Rawat Bhim Singh and was an ally of Shinde. In 1791 on his final journey to Chittor, Mahadji was able to settle Mewar for Shinde's due to support of Zalim Singh and Salumbar chief Rawat Bhim Singh's co-operation against Udaipur ruler.

Even Mahadji Shinde tried to lure others to his side during the fight against the Rajputs. Banjaras' support was vital for maintaining supplies as they were the one on whom supplies depended in Rajasthan region. On the eve of Lalsot Campaign Mahadji honoured the Banjara chief present in his camp with Scarf and Turban. Also because at the time of the Lalsot Campaign prices of food items had gone up in his camp and their cooperation was absolutely essential.⁴ Shinde also abolished *Mahsul* (octroi duty) to get Banjaras support in maintaining supply of grain and other essential items.⁵ Banjaras maintained Shindes supplies at Lalsot with grain convoy and other items including currency (money) that they brought from Gwalior.⁶

¹ Ibid., L.7/p.24 See Also, L.19/ p.76 where Kishangarh Affairs are discussed by the Peshwa's *Vakil* after the Battle of Merta

² Ibid., L.7/p.41

³ *Sindhia as Regent of Delhi*, Sarkar(ed.), p.42

⁴ Ibid., pp.2,4

⁵ Ibid., pp.4,14

⁶ Ibid., p.14

However, another local community of the Meenas were looting grain convoys as well as animals from Maratha camps during the Lalsot campaign. In one incident reported from Mahadji Camp on 7th July 13 Meena horsemen carried off 2 camels. Also Meenas took away camels and ponies. Fruits coming to the Marathas were robbed on the way beyond Toda.¹ According to news report on 10th July on another location the Meenas plundered 3 carts of grain from the camp. In one of the bigger loot 150 bullocks of grain were carried off from the rear of the grain convoy heading for Mahadji's camp as reported on 13th July, 1787.² Wary of their ways as they also robbed and kidnapped, Marathas captured 11 Meenas near their camp as reported on 17th July 1787.

Mahadji also was able to win over powerful and enterprising men in the courts of Jaipur and Jodhpur. Khushali Ram Bohra, earlier *diwan* of Jaipur later fell out with Jaipur ruler. According to Maratha *vakil* Krishnaji Jagannath's report Khushali Ram was asked to supply vital military intelligence by visiting Jodhpur area and by meeting Govardhan Khichi. Govardhan Khichi from Khichiwada in Malwa region was an enemy of Shinde and advised Jodhpur ruler on matters relating to Marathas. Bohra was assigned the task of finding the strength of Jodhpur army, their terms for negotiation with Marathas and other related matters of strategic importance.³

Similarly Bhawani Ram Bhandari became a close confidant of Shinde when he arrived in his court as a clerk with the Jodhpur *vakil* Kriparam Joshi. Later due to his close cooperation with Shindes in matters of Jodhpur state through Gopal Raghunath Chitnis,⁴ he was made *diwan* of Jodhpur when Bijay Singh died. Henceforth Marathas were dominating the Jodhpur state affairs with his co-operation.

Looking at Shinde and Holkar's stay in Rajasthan and Central India, overall it won't be wrong to argue that continued local resistance was met with forceful military campaigns. There were stable pockets in southern Malwa where Shinde and Holkar were able to bring back normalcy and spur development of agriculture and commerce related activities. However, beyond the hinterlands of Indore and

¹ Ibid., p.2

² Ibid., p.4

³ *Marwar-Maratha Aitihasik Patravali*, L.5/p.32.

⁴ Ibid., L.19/p.76

Ujjain they were not able to bring back peace and stability enjoyed by a superior power over its local elites.

The stay of Maratha forces and officials in Central India and Rajasthan was not a happy experience for the local people. Maratha depredations during the early inroads under the Peshwas were often admonished by the Central leadership when reports of loot and plunder reached Peshwa. However, Maratha sardars were not so vigilant of atrocities committed during the campaigns. *Paimali* – the reduction in Maratha levies from the local ruler on account of damages to the standing crops was one such example. But often damages were done not only to standing crops but to property in the towns and villages and there were forceful collection of dues when the army was in desperate need of money. Madho Singh wrote to Peshwa in 1758 objecting to the loot and plunder by Maratha army in the Jaipur territory evident from the reference to it by Peshwa Balaji Bajirao himself in his reply.¹ Just before the Lalsot campaign in 1787, Persian newsletter from Mahadji's camp mentions Ambaji Ingle, Shinde's general burning two nearby villages and looting villagers stock of grain. During the same period in another Persian newsletter from Jaipur court describes disturbances by *zamindars* of Ranthambore district. Meenas of the region too damaged property in the Maratha camps at Lalsot and lifted their cattles, probably in retaliation to Maratha presence.

However, it is also important to note that in these 50 years of regular military campaign and warfare existing gaps between South and North were getting covered. New routes of transport and communication opened. Mughals were marching South more by Agra-Burhanpur-Surat route, Marathas popularised the lesser used route via Ujjain and Kota. By the end of 18th Century thus towns in Maharashtra were better linked to those in Malwa like Indore, Gwalior and Ujjain. Maratha presence in the Northern towns of Jaipur, Ajmer, Mathura, Kota, Jhansi and some smaller town in Rajasthan and Central India was for commerce and pilgrimage too along with ambitions of territorial conquests. Men from Maratha ruled area were now present at various Maratha centers of power as

¹ Gwalior Kharita No.165, Magh Sudi 1, 1815/1758

...सीध श्री महाराजाधिराज श्री सवाई माधो सींघजी जोग्य श्री पंडीत मुख्यप्रधान श्री बालाजी बाजीराव को आसीर्वाद बचना औटा का समाचार भलोछे उठा को भला चाहिजे अप्रंच आपको कागज आया समाचार जाण्या थो लिख्योछो जो देस में फौज आयकर देसमुलक लुटिछे इवास्ते लिखोछा

soldiers, traders and officials in civil and military set up. The longstanding presence the Marathas lessened regional barriers; more influence of outside powers in nooks and corners of the countryside were possible now. Local and intra-regional movement of people for trade, pilgrimage etc. between Maharashtra and Central India as well as from Central India to Rajasthan and Delhi-Agra region got a boost.

GLOSSARY

<i>Amaldar</i>	:	Official
<i>Amil</i>	:	A revenue collector in the Mughal and later administrative set up in North India including Rajasthan
<i>Bargir</i>	:	Soldiers using state equipment. A trooper that is mounted and equipped by the chief or state that employs him, opp. to <i>Shiledar</i> ; hired trooper
<i>Bhaum(ia)</i>	:	Term for Zamindar in Rajasthan
<i>Biniwala</i>	:	Quarter Master in Maratha army
<i>Campoo</i>	:	Indian term for Brigade, a unit in the European pattern army raised in India
<i>Charvadar</i>	:	Those personnel who maintained horses
<i>Chauki</i>	:	Outpost
<i>Daftar</i>	:	Collection of papers or records, pertaining to one particular person or state for example <i>Peshwa Daftar</i> , <i>Kota Daftar</i> , <i>Mandloi Daftar</i>
<i>Dastur</i>	:	Code of conduct that was followed during the period of a stay of a guest in the Jaipur court
<i>Daulat</i>	:	Marathi term for estate & attached property, estate of a Maratha chieftain
<i>Deekhni</i>	:	Marathas called by this term in the court of Jaipur State and also in other parts of North India
<i>Deorhi</i>	:	Protected place which acted as the entrance for the haveli and fortress
<i>Diwan</i>	:	Chief financial officer of a state
<i>Doab</i>	:	Territory enclosed by the rivers Ganga and Yamuna
<i>Durrah</i>	:	Valley, pass
<i>Faujdar</i>	:	Highest ranking military officer of a <i>suba</i> or <i>sarkar</i> during the Mughal period, in the 18 th century period Zalim Singh too held the post of <i>faujdar</i> in the Kota state
<i>Faujkharch</i>	:	Payment of an amount of money equivalent to the expenditure on a standing army in the territory of the local elite
<i>Fauj-saranjam</i>	:	Land Assigned for raising as well as maintenance of a contingent of troops
<i>Garh</i>	:	Fort or Stronghold of a chief

<i>Garhi</i>	:	Fortress or Stronghold of a chief, smaller in dimension compared to <i>Garh</i>
<i>Ghanim</i>	:	A Persian term for the Marathas; Marathas called by this term in the court of Jaipur State and other parts of North India
<i>Ghanimi</i> <i>Ghasdana</i>	:	Fodder money, a military contribution amounting to five percent of the revenue
<i>Gosain</i>	:	An Ascetic person, a celibate of a martial category during the 18 th century and essential part of the army of many chiefs of Western and North India
<i>Gumasta</i>	:	Official
<i>Halkara</i>	:	Those who carried letters and messages
<i>Hat</i>	:	Weekly Fairs
<i>Haveli</i>	:	Residential area of a chief in a fort or stronghold
<i>Hundi</i>	:	Written document for payment of a sum of money issued by a merchant banker in the name of the claimant to be paid by a designated merchant banker in another city; Bill of exchange
<i>Huzurat</i>	:	Kings own troops and later on that of a particular <i>sardar</i> Shinde or Holkar
<i>Ijara</i>	:	Revenue farming; unyielding piece of land from point of view of revenue administration granted to the highest bidder on contract for a fixed period of time
<i>Istawa Makhta</i>	:	Method of revenue collection initiating a stepwise increase in revenue from three to six year periods.
<i>Jaydad</i>	:	Piece or tract of land given to Maratha generals to maintain their troops akin to <i>saranjam</i> with full sovereign rights
<i>Jins</i>	:	Commodity
<i>Jinsi</i>	:	Park of Artillery of a Maratha Chief
<i>Jinsa</i>	:	Grand Park of Artillery
<i>Kabila</i>	:	Family
<i>Kamavisdar</i>	:	A revenue official of the Marathas
<i>Kamdar</i>	:	An agent for the administration of property
<i>Karbhari</i>	:	Office of Administrator/Manager or agent in the particular areas under Maratha administration
<i>Kashida</i>	:	Messenger or those who were moving on the way with the letters of the rulers and other officials
<i>Khandni</i>	:	Tribute paid without assessment of land revenue

<i>Kharita</i>	:	A special letter addressed by the head of the state to another Head
<i>Khas Deorhi</i>	:	Where the ruler's ancestral or private buildings were located
<i>Khas</i>	:	Pertaining or relating to the king or state; government & Own , private, personal
<i>Khasbargir</i>	:	The horse guard of the person of the king or chief
<i>Khasgi</i>	:	Household department, One's private or personal property or business
<i>Khaspaga</i>	:	The body of horse under the immediate keeping and command of the king or ruler or the State.
<i>Khassawari</i>	:	The equipage, procession or train of a chieftain
<i>Khilat</i>	:	Robe of honour bestowed by a superior in rank
<i>Khufianavis</i>	:	Spy of the State monitoring state affairs especially security related matters
<i>Kilikhana</i>	:	Workshop or Department for manufacturing iron implements
<i>Kumedan</i>	:	The post of Commandant in the European army
<i>Mahal</i>	:	A territorial unit smaller than a pargana
<i>Mahsul</i>	:	Tax collected from foreigners entering a particular ruler's territory, especially traders
<i>Makhta</i>	:	Contract, Revenue Farming
<i>Mamlat</i>	:	A specified area assigned for revenue collection in the Maratha territory
<i>Mamlatdar</i>	:	Maratha Revenue collector of a particular <i>mamlat</i>
<i>Mardana Deorhi</i>	:	Entrance for males to the royal palace and also the space at the entrance of the fort or <i>haveli</i> where visitors were received
<i>Modi</i>	:	Original Marathi script which was later replaced by <i>Balbodhi</i> or <i>Devnagri</i> Script
<i>Mulk-giri</i>	:	Expedition of conquest or ransom/tribute collection
<i>Munshi</i>	:	Clerk or accountant
<i>Mutsadi</i>	:	An official in the revenue department
<i>Najib</i>	:	Muslims soldiers in the army of the European mercenaries
<i>Nalbandi</i>	:	Advance money given to Maratha soldiers before a campaign by their sardars for purchase of arms and ammunition; amount given for preparations of war
<i>Nazar</i>	:	Succession Fee charged by the Mughal Emperor, later by the tradition was also adopted by the Peshwa

		and Maratha sardars when dealing with their subordinates during the time of succession
<i>Paga</i>	:	Maratha Sardars armed contingent
<i>Paimali</i>	:	Rebate in tax collection over the area destroyed by Maratha army during their visit
<i>Palpatti</i>	:	A tax paid by Pindaris for the protection the Marathas provided them
<i>Pargana</i>	:	Territorial and administrative subdivision below <i>Sarkar</i> in Mughal and Maratha territory
<i>Peshkash</i>	:	Tribute in form of a fixed sum of money or household items equivalent to it to be collected from the subordinate chieftains in Maratha dominated areas
<i>Peshwa</i>	:	Prime Minister in Chhatrapati Shivaj's council of ministers called <i>Ashta Pradhan</i> , from the period of Balaji Vishwanath the position of Peshwa gained superior status and after the death of <i>Chhatrapati</i> Sahu Peshwa became defacto ruler of Maratha ruled territory
<i>Pindhari</i>	:	Maratha camp follower, engaged in looting and plunder of areas visited by Maratha <i>sardars</i>
<i>Qawa</i>	:	Indigenous Maratha System of warfare; literally meant light foray tactics
<i>Rahdari</i>	:	Road tax collected from the traders
<i>Rasad</i>	:	A sum of money taken in advance from the Maratha <i>Mamlatdar</i> and Kamavisdars before the beginning of an agricultural season
<i>Ryot</i>	:	Cultivator
<i>Samvat</i>	:	Year according to the <i>Vikram</i> era, which is 57 years ahead of the Christian calendar
<i>Sanad</i>	:	Letter of grant or an order issued from the court of Maratha ruler or from the office of the Peshwa or any other ruler
<i>Saranjam</i>	:	Assignment of land to a Maratha sardars or his subordinate
<i>Sardars</i>	:	Chiefs or army commanders
<i>Sarkar</i>	:	A Mughal administrative division, smaller than a <i>suba</i> , usually composed of several <i>parganas</i> & <i>mahals</i> .
<i>Shibandi</i>	:	Untrained troops, auxiliary force (foreign or allied troops)

<i>Shiledar</i>	:	A horse soldier who provides his own horse and arms for fighting
<i>Shileposh</i>	:	Those personnel who managed arms and weapons
<i>Telingas</i>	:	Hindu soldiers in the army raised by European mercenaries
<i>Thana</i>	:	A fortified post with its garrison for the military occupation of the country; <i>Thana</i> in Mughal vocabulary meant a corps of cavalry, matchlockmen, and archers, stationed within an enclosure. Their duty was to guard the roads, to hold the places surrounding the <i>Thana</i> and to dispatch provisions to the next <i>Thana</i> .
<i>Topkhana</i>	:	Department & Manufacturing place for large and heavy guns
<i>Vakil</i>	:	Representative or Agent that a state appointed in another ruler's court
<i>Vakil-i-Mutlaq</i>	:	Deputy to the Mughal Emperor
<i>Watan / Vatan</i>	:	Homeland, patrimonial estate of a Maratha with hereditary vested right
<i>Zamindar</i>	:	Landholder with hereditary rights
<i>Zenana Deorhi</i>	:	Space within fort or <i>haveli</i> where female members gathered
<i>Zhadti</i>	:	Clearing off or year end account done for the paymaster

Kharita Addressed by Peshwa Madhav Rao to Prithvi Singh of Jaipur

॥ सीध श्री माहाराजाधीराज श्री माहाराज श्री
 ॥ राजराजेंद्र सवाई पृथ्वी सींह जी जोग्यलीष
 ॥ तं पंडीत मुख्य प्रधान श्री माधवराव के अरि
 ॥ बदि वचना आराकास्मान्चार श्री जीकी
 ॥ ह्मपा सुमल्लाखे आपकास्मान्चार सदा सर्व
 ॥ दाग लालाहिजे अप्रच अपने दुसरा वरित
 ॥ भेज्याथा और उसमे लीप्या सो सेयदषु
 ॥ बुल्लाशाइन के साराज श्री ये कंटराव मोरे
 ॥ सरकु ने जदेना को लीवा लो दो नो मुसारन
 ॥ इलेकु अपके तरफ मो कले है पोहनेगे मी
 ॥ तीसावण सुध संवत वट २५ सु
 ॥ काम पु नारुत कायलिहिणे है जी
 ॥ शिवदि = = = = =

मोहेश्वर

॥ सीध श्री महाराजाधिराज श्री सवाई माधोसिंगजी
 ॥ जोग्य श्री पंडीत श्री रघुनाथ बाजिराव को आपसी
 ॥ वाद बंचने अथवा कोस्माचार भलो छे आपका स
 ॥ दा भला चाहिजे अपरंच आपके तरफ काउपी
 ॥ या कातिक महीनै के किस्ति का सीरकार मे अबला
 ॥ ई आपा नहि की स्तु बंदी का करार था सो बुग गया
 ॥ बात अपसनेर को जोग्य नहिं उपीया की ता किदपुरा
 ॥ दीयां को कराय जलदी से उपीया भेज देना यामे आ
 ॥ छोहं हमे साका गदस्माचार लीप बो करो ला कीति
 ॥ कातिक सुदी १० समत १८१४ वर्षे मुकासा जना
 ॥ वाद

Kharita Addressed by Raghunath Baji Rao to Madho Singh of Jaipur

॥ सीधी श्री माहाराजाधीराजराजराजे इ माहाराजा श्री स्वामी पृथ्वी
सीधे जी जोग्यलीपनराज श्री सुवेदार माहादजी गीदे के न श्री
बंवाई ठाकासमाचार श्री जीकी कपासुं भगधिराज का
सदा जल चाहिजे अग्रेंच व होत दीना पोछे का गद जो सो पोछे
घणो आनंद हुवे समाचार श्री राजा सदा रीषी का वारा वत जस
वंत सीधे जी का गद सुं वामोती रंम का अरज सुं भाल्म हुवा अंग सुं
मसार न ले नैली पोछे वामोती रंम सुं ली वा या छे ती सुं जाहर होमी
हेमसा का गद समाचार ली वा वतार होला मी ती माहा वदी १४
समत् १८२६

॥ सिध श्री महाराजाधिराज राजर्ज इ महारा
 ॥ जा श्री सवाई माधव सिध जी जोग्य श्री मल्ला
 ॥ सराव होल कर के श्री बांच जो अंग का समा
 ॥ चार श्री जी के रुपा सुमल ठेरा जका स
 ॥ दा भला चाही जे अपर च आगे का गद
 ॥ जे जे हे ती पर समा चार जो न हो वेगे
 ॥ राज श्री सुलतान जीलां चोते वासंता
 ॥ जीवा बले वा गोवींद राव बुले दस हजा
 ॥ रफो ज सु ठवल पुर की तरफ जी दा की
 ॥ ये हे सारो भी दोरा ज मे अंग सु कुच
 ॥ उसी तरफ हो वेगो राज अपनी फोज का
 ॥ मां की तरफ ता की द सु ने जो गंधो र
 ॥ समाचार मिश्र नंद राम के ली से सजा
 ॥ नो लामी ती चैत्र पदी १० सम १७८२

Kharita Addressed by Malhar Rao Holkar to Madho Singh of Jaipur

॥सिद्धि श्रीसर्वोपमा श्रीमहाराजाधिराजराजराजेंद्रमहारा

॥जा श्रीसवाईप्रतापसिंहजीजोग्यश्रीमहाराजाधिराजश्रीम

॥हाराजाप्राक्तीजाहसकवेदारजीश्रीमाधोरावजीसिंदेकेन

॥वाञ्छ्यअठाकास्माचारमलाधुराजकासदानलाचाहिजे

॥अपारस्वविलापतसेधोडेजेपुरमेंसवदागरलेआएहेती

॥गसेतुरकीधोडेहेसुतुरकीधोडेवास्तेपुनासेश्रीमंतकी

॥रमासआठेलीधीआदीहेसुधोडेवीलापतसेउठेआएहे

॥तीनमेंधोडेतुरकीचलाधुबुसुरतीवोहोतआधेदेवके

॥रधोडेवरीदीकरवाएकेजलदजलदआठेमेजवाएदेसि

॥धोडेमेजोसिरेधोडेहोपसोलेकेमेजदीज्योसवदागरीको

॥डेमेजोआधेहोपसोतिज्योओरआपकेपासतुरकीआधे

॥होपउसमेसेवासवदागरकेपासनेवरीदीकरलीषेमुजक

॥रधोडेमेजदीज्योआरधोडेकीहीमतहोपगोरोदेनेमे

॥आवसीमितीचेतरुहीदरुः१८४४

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MARATHI

Correspondences in Marathi from the very beginning of Peshwa's campaign in Central India are the richest collection for the entire period of the study. Separate series of correspondence deal with Peshwa, Holkar and Shinde's day-to-day engagements ranging from military campaigns, movement of Maratha Sardars in the localities. Of Central India, fast changing situation in the courts of local elites, payment of tribute etc. As the period progresses these correspondences are richer in detail about day-to-day movement of Maratha army on various fronts and results of Maratha military operations against the local powers.

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